The New REPUBLIC

A Journal of Opinion

VOL. LVI NEW YORK, WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 17, 1928 NUMBER 724

Contents

The Week 231

Editorials

Too Much Politics in Religion 234
An End to Speculation? 236

General Articles

Why I Am for Smith ..... Edward Mead Earle 238
Mr. Hoover on Power Control ... Felix Frankfurter 240
The Seed Shop ..... David McCord 243
How They Will Vote 245
Washington Notes ..... T. R. B. 246
Northern Lights ..... Stark Young 247
A Great Magician ..... Edmund Wilson 248

Correspondence 250

Reviews of Books

The Legend of Charles Dickens ..... Robert Morss Lovett 252
Mr. Hughes on the Supreme Court ..... Robert E. Cushman 253
The Newest Testament ..... Avrahm Yarmolinsky 254
In Vindication of Poetry ..... Yvor Winters 255
Fiction Notes 256

The Week

PROGRESSIVES should fully appreciate the significance of Mr. Hoover's back-door and furtive performance on Muscle Shoals. After carefully avoiding for months the question of government operation of water-power plants there and elsewhere, he made a pronouncement in his Elizabethton, Tenn., speech, which might have been written by the private power lobbyists themselves, warning in general terms against "government competition with private business." The Scripps-Howard newspapers, which had strongly supported public operation, and had also decided, even before he was nominated, to support Mr. Hoover, thus found themselves in an acute stage of a dilemma. Mr. Edward J. Meeman, editor of the Knoxville News Sentinel, one of the Scripps-Howard chain, thereupon had a private conversation with the candidate, reminding him of a phrase in the speech in which he had admitted the desirability of government ownership in certain instances, and was authorized to quote him, "You may say that means Muscle Shoals." This fact was put on the wires and played up by the Scripps-Howard papers and others, in a dispatch which explained that Mr. Hoover had not thought it worth while mentioning Muscle Shoals in his speech since that speech was delivered not merely to a community specially interested in the project, but to the country generally, through the radio. This implication that Mr. Hoover did not believe that the issue is of genuine national importance was amazing enough, but more was to follow.

SOME of the dispatches covering this second-hand assurance had stated that Mr. Hoover favored government ownership *and* operation. Whether he added the "operation" or not was the crux of the matter, since the whole controversy between those protecting the consumers' interest and the power lobbyists has centered about the question whether the power plant should be completed and operated by the government, or should be leased to a private company. There has never been any serious proposal for the government to alienate the plant, which it already owns. Governor Smith has clearly stated his position in favor of government operation, with sale of the surplus power not required for fertilizer experiments and manufacture, under contracts which would protect the consumers' interest in moderate rates and fair distribution. Naturally Mr. Hoover was besieged for a clearer statement. After a day of trembling and shilly-shallying, he finally issued one which stated the obvious fact that there is no question regarding government ownership, and failed to mention government operation of the power plant. In these circumstances. we have no choice but to believe that he will carry on the Coolidge policy of opposition to government operation—an oppositin signalized this year by the pocket veto of the Muscle Shoals bill which specified the program advocated by the progressives and Governor Smith. The danger is that some progressives will be misled by Mr. Hoover's incomplete statement into believing that he is pledged to the course they favor. We hope the Scripps-Howard editors will have candor enough to explain that he is not.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ITALY'S note regarding the Anglo-French naval accord has been published in official summary, and makes the prospect for agreement, and for any serious reduction of naval armament, gloomier than ever. Italy takes the position held by the United States, and formerly by France, that each country should be limited to a fixed "global" tonnage, but should divide this among the various categories as it sees fit. To such a proposal the British are as unlikely to consent now as they were eighteen months ago, when the Geneva conference broke down because of it. Italy further demands complete equality with every other continental European power, a suggestion to which the French are strongly opposed. It is true that France accepted equality with Italy as to capital ships, at the Washington conference of 1921, but she feels her vast colonial empire makes it imperative for her to build cruisers and submarines on a scale the Italians cannot afford to equal, and have no need to.

THE next meeting of the League's Preparatory Commission on Limitation of Armament will be confronted, therefore, by two major disagreements. The United States and Great Britain are in the sharpest possible conflict on both the total cruiser tonnage, and the manner of disposing of it. In this quarrel France now sides with Great Britain, though the United States in its recent note offered special concessions in view of the special needs of the French, which may have had some effect. France and Italy are equally opposed, with Great Britain supporting France and the United States on the whole agreeing with Italy. The British government has stated unequivocally that if any power offers objection to any point in the tentative Anglo-French accord, at the next meeting of the Preparatory Commission, that point will be modified; and newspaper correspondents in both London and Paris have assumed for some time that the compact is dead. On the other hand, the text of the correspondence between the two powers, published a few days ago in close paraphrase, suggests on the contrary that if the United States, Japan and Italy should disapprove the agreement, it will be necessary for France and England to continue by themselves. Under the circumstances, we may expect the next session of the Preparatory Commission to be postponed indefinitely, and it is better that it should be. There should be no risk of a disastrous repetition of the failure at Geneva last year.

MUSSOLINI has now turned up playing the role of King Canute, though his purpose is not to halt a rising tide but a receding one. In his article in the current issue of *Gerachia,* he studies sadly the statistics showing the decline in the Italian birthrate. Less than fifty years ago, it was 38 per 1,000 persons per annum; in 1915, it was 30, in 1927 only 26. While Italy and the rest of Europe move in this direction, he says that the black and yellow races are increasing. He sees a period of serious menace to white domination because of this, unless the whites, and the Italians in particular, increase their numbers faster than they are at present doing. He notes that in Italy the most rapid decline is in the northern industrial cities, and demands of the Milanese whether they want to see their Cathedral square turned into a sheep pasture?—a somewhat wild statement in view of the fact that Italy's population is still increasing at the rate of 10.4 per annum, faster than in any other civilized country except Japan.

THERE IS no scientific support for Mussolini's thesis that the black and yellow races are growing in numbers so rapidly that they are a menace to white domination. In equatorial Africa, thanks to the introduction of European vices, plus, in some districts, forced labor and the disruption of the native economic system, the population is generally at a standstill or declining. In India and China, mortality rates are so high that they offset the enormous birthrate; both countries are at a saturation point of population. In Japan, it is true, modern industrialism has been laid on top of a medieval social system, and the decline in the death-rate which follows improved sanitation has given that country an annual increment in population 50 percent larger even than Italy's. But the fact that Japan still countenances a situation perilous in the extreme is no reason why any European country should follow its example. Mussolini's philosophy is as bad as his facts. Luckily, there is good reason to believe that the Italians will decline to take his advice, despite even the tax on bachelors and the contemplated tax on childless couples.

PRESIDENT MACHADO of Cuba has publicly suggested the repeal of the Platt Amendment, which gives the United States the right to control Cuban foreign relations and to intervene, whenever she deems it necessary, to maintain a government "adequate for the protection of life, property and individual liberty." The President was undoubtedly speaking for the effect upon his own compatriots; the rank and file of the Cubans resemble other Latin-Americans in their dislike of domination by the United States, and the only safe road to political success among them is to make an occasional face at the Colossus of the North. So sensitive are they that, for example, when the film, "The Rough Riders," was shown in Havana, the titles were carefully changed to omit all reference to the United States' having "saved" Cuba in '98. President Machado must know very well, however, that there is not the slightest chance that the Platt Amendment will be dropped in the near future. He knows, also, that even if we should abandon political control, we now have an economic control which is still more complete. In the past three decades, New York financiers have come to own most of Cuba's

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

important enterprises, so that American citizens today exercise a degree of domination over all the affairs of the island which was undreamed of of when the Platt Amendment was written. This is a process in which President Machado has been an important participant, and he would certainly be the last to wish it reversed.

AFTER heroic resistance, the New Bedford textile strikers have voted by a narrow margin to compromise by accepting a 5 percent wage reduction instead of the 10 percent originally announced by the employers, accompanied by the assurance that thirty days' notice will be given before any future wage changes, instead of a point-blank announcement such as precipitated the strike. This will provide an opportunity for collective bargaining, negotiation and mediation before hostilities begin. We do not blame the strikers for their partial surrender, in view of their long period of unemployment and the fact that winter is at hand, though we wish they could have scored a 100 percent victory, including not merely cancellation of the wage cut but the chance which they asked to coöperate with the employers to increase efficiency of operation. By insisting on the 5 percent reduction, the mill managers have of course thrown away the enormous potentialities of that coöperation, since workers sore from a wage reduction and a lost battle are in no mood to aid efficiency. Millions of dollars have already been lost by the shut-down; it is a question when, or even if, the New Bedford mills will regain their trade. Anyone crediting the employers with intelligence would be forced to believe that they had practised deliberate sabotage upon the New Bedford textile industry. But, alas, many employers seem incapable of learning that a Bourbon labor policy must in the end be disastrous.

TWO recent events have heartened those Americans who would like to see the United States become a member of the World Court. The fact that Mr. Hughes is now a judge of the Court will, it is thought, serve to allay the fears of some timorous persons that this is a monstrous organization with which we should have no traffic of any kind; and the signing of the Kellogg treaty has given additional point to the criticism that we have failed to adhere to the one existing organization for applying the rules of law to international disputes. When the Senate reconvenes in December, the Foreign Relations Committee will have before it as unfinished business carried over from the last session the Gillett resolution. This proposal goes only so far as to request the President to reopen negotiations with the other powers, looking toward the acceptance of the American reservations. Senator Gillett will probably modify even this innocuous proposal, in accordance with a suggestion made by Senator Walsh of Montana, and have his resolution

> request the President to enter into negotiations with nation members of the League and of the World Court, to seek to have the Court render a decision as to whether a majority vote or a unanimous vote of the Council of the League is necessary to ask the Court for an advisory opinion.

This, it will be remembered, was one of the chief points in American criticism of the Court when the subject was being agitated. The Senate insisted that the Court should not render an advisory opinion without our consent, on any subject as to which the United States "had or claimed" an interest. For the purpose of asking the Court for an opinion, we should act temporarily as a member of the League Council, and if unanimous decision were needed, we should, of course, have a veto power; if a majority vote would suffice, the League members could overrule us. Membership in the Court is not of itself very important, and particularly on the only terms which the United States would accept, excluding the compulsory arbitration clause. Nevertheless, it would have psychological value, particularly in view of the Kellogg treaty. For that reason we hope the Senate will act favorably upon the Gillett resolution, so that President Coolidge and his successor will have no excuse for failing to take the matter up again.

THE SCRIPPS FOUNDATION, one of the few scientific organizations in the world seriously studying the population question, has attempted to prophesy what conditions in the United States will be like fifty years hence. It finds that there will be fewer Negroes, foreign-born and children, while elderly persons will be markedly more numerous. Negroes are expected to decrease from 10 to 9 percent of the total, the foreign-born from 13 to 6, children under fifteen from one-third to one-fourth. Persons over fifty will increase from one-sixth to one-fourth. The proportion of the population living in cities will be increased from 51 percent in 1920, the year of the latest census, to 69 percent. These mystic-sounding figures of course mean nothing. They are obtained by projecting into the future a group of the tendencies of the recent past. It is true that fewer babies are born nowadays, that we live longer, that more of us reside in towns than formerly, that the Negro stock, as such, is not holding its own, that the immigration laws have cut down the influx from Europe. But it is also true that the future of America is unpredictable. At any time the march of mechanical invention may turn our civilization upside down; cities may be decentralized, or through the progress of synthetic chemistry, agriculture as we know it today may disappear. The same thing is true of our national immigration policy, and of the birth and death-rates. The one certain thing about the future is that nothing is certain; the projected graphs of the Scripps Foundation are interesting for what they tell us about today, not about tomorrow.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A NEW horror has been added to the miseries of metropolitan life, but, we trust, only temporarily. Recently an aeroplane has been flying over New York City, equipped with a loud-speaking device which amplifies the human voice—or any other noise—something like a hundred million times. From the sky, singers have sung, saxophones have bleated, and slick-tongued announcers have expatiated on the merits of somebody's cigarettes. On the first trials the words spoken were almost entirely unintelligible; the air was simply filled with vast and disagreeable sounds, coming from no identifiable spot. However, the experience would have been no pleasanter, and might have been worse, for the unhappy victims below, if the machinery had worked well. If this sort of thing doesn't come under the head of unjustifiable invasion of privacy, we should like to know what does. As advertising, it may or may not be of some value; as a nuisance, it is a great success.

Too Much Politics in Religion

AN "ARDENT supporter of Governor Smith," Mr. Vincent V. R. Booth of the Harvard Law School, has submitted to the New Republic an argument, which he would like to have answered from the point of view of an anti-prohibitionist advocate of Al Smith's election. The Protestant churches, he says, convinced as they were by their own experience of the social evils of the liquor traffic exerted all their influence to bring about the enactment of the Eighteenth Amendment and the Volstead Act. Governor Smith is agitating to reverse the policy of prohibition which the nation adopted as the result of this clerical political pressure. Are the churches not fully entitled to urge his defeat and publicly to support Mr. Hoover, who has declared in favor of both the Amendment and the enforcing law?

The question, as Mr. Booth puts it, assumes as true a somewhat misleading account of the facts. No doubt the Protestant churches were the most positive single influence in the adoption of the Eighteenth Amendment, and no doubt Protestant clergymen all over the country are working zealously to prevent the election of Governor Smith, partly because he is a Catholic and partly because he proposes a reconsideration of the policy of national prohibition. But the Protestant churches as corporate bodies have not entered the lists to oppose Governor Smith, any more than the Catholic church has expressly declared in his favor. So far as we know, the Southern Baptists and the Methodists of Ohio are the only Protestant groups which have officially assumed a partisan attitude in the campaign. The worst that can be said is that the leaders of the more popular Protestant sects, as a group of like-minded individuals, being themselves chiefly responsible for national prohibition, are throwing their collective prestige into the fray in order to prevent the election of an anti-prohibitionist candidate for the presidency.

Professor Edward Earle elsewhere in the New Republic vigorously expresses the way in which many intelligent laymen regard the political activities of these Protestant clerics. In his opinion, their effort to discredit Mr. Smith threatens the American people with ecclesiastical and theocratic domination. They are setting an example of the rule of fanaticism and bigotry which, if it is not checked, "will overwhelm every dissenter as well as every Jew and every other non-Christian." He condemns the present conduct of the Protestant clerics as essentially un-American. The New Republic does not entirely agree with Professor Earle in this wholesale condemnation of the activities of Protestant clergymen in the present election. In so far as their interference is official and is carried on by the churches as organizations, there is something to be said for his indignation and alarm, but, as we have seen, this is true only to a small extent. In so far as they are unofficial and represent the voluntary association of the members of certain religious groups to vindicate their views of public policy, their behavior cannot fairly be stigmatized as flagrantly un-American. The Protestant clergymen who believe in the Eighteenth Amendment are fully entitled to oppose Governor Smith's election. They are entitled even, if such is their way of mind, to pull their God on him as the enemy of a law which they take to be a valid example of the application of Protestant Christianity to a social problem. The effective answer to them is not to pull on them some fundamentalist dogma of the complete separation of church and state or of politics as exclusive of religion. It is rather to explain why, by supporting as a matter of religious truth a doubtful law, they are compromising their spiritual authority, and to make them and American public opinion conscious of the meaning and consequences of such behavior. In the heat of conflict, it is always a temptation to try to disqualify your adversaries, particularly when they are doing their best to disqualify you, but it does not tend to create an atmosphere inimical to fanaticism and bigotry. It is well to show toleration even of intolerance.

In the conduct of democratic government, it is peculiarly important for significant economic, religious, cultural or social groups to express themselves fully according to the bidding of their interests and the nature of their lights. The community can less afford to have a major group undervalue, ignore, suppress or take for granted its interests or convictions than to have it assert them, explicitly and even offensively, but by so asserting to bring them out into the open. The two most powerful and conscious groups in American life of today are the large-scale business men, who carry on its dy-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

namic economic processes and the small-town Protestant traders, whose pastors are the spokesmen of its traditional culture. The large-scale business men are the human agents of certain revolutionary collectivistic economic activities which they rationalize in terms of the old American pioneer individualism. They are becoming increasingly class conscious and they consider themselves, because of the social importance and the imposing magnitude of their interests, entitled to dictate the policies of government. The New Republic is opposed to the kind of government which they would like to order, but it welcomes their effort to assert themselves politically as a revelation of the meaning in a democratic society of their worship of economic power. Only by aggressively magnifying their interests and by trying to bring about the political consequences of their autocratic organization of industry will they provoke the wholesome and necessary resistance of other classes to their domination. So it is with the small-town church-goers and traders whose pastors are opposing the election of Governor Smith. They have for many generations dominated American popular culture in the interest of a narrow, didactic, moralistic, dogmatic version of Christian truth. Not until recently has their domination been challenged. But now the rising generation, particularly in so far as its members live in the cities and have been subjected to scientific and technical training, are showing an increasing scepticism of its dogmas and an increasing revolt against its rules of life. Its recent aggressive self-assertion is its answer to the insidious undermining of the cultural supremacy which so many economic, intellectual and social forces conspire to accomplish. It is protecting what is left of its once unchallenged authority.

The Eighteenth Amendment means a great deal to this cultural group. National prohibition is the outstanding achievement in politics of its social aspirations. For the most part its clerical leaders have tended to keep politics and religion in separate compartments of their minds. They have been much more preoccupied with seeking by any means whatsoever individual rights and welfare. For many generations they have been particularly troubled by the evils of intemperance. In the beginning their favorite spiritual medicine for the disease was revivalistic exhortation, culminating in conversion and a total abstinence pledge on the part of the sinner. It was only after having failed to make sufficient headway by such methods of controlling personal conduct that they called political power to their assistance. They then attempted to accomplish individual reformation by means of state prohibition. Their new policy was an expression on their part both of weakness and of strength. It revealed their impotence to accomplish social reforms, which were the product largely of individual infirmities, by exerting their spiritual authority, but it indicated also an awakened social conscience which was the expression of a somewhat liberated Christianity. The result after a generation of agitation was the Eighteenth Amendment.

Surely they have every right to protect their cherished achievement in alleged Christian politics and to exert any authority they may have as Christian clergymen to that end. The sound objection to what they are doing is not that they are violating some dogma of democratic government, but that they have ignored the social and political effects of their experiment in social legislation. The plain fact is that prohibition by state command has up to date failed as completely in abating the evils of intemperance as did the total abstinence pledge of the last century. It is notorious that the law is being defied systematically, generally and conscientiously by the most reputable people in the community. The fact of its defiance with practical impunity by such a large proportion of the wealthy and prominent American citizens as well as by the urban poor is a social evil of at least equal importance to the evils of intemperance; and its existence should give pause above all to clerical prohibitionists. They have no authority to put a stop to the new social disease which they have indirectly brought about by their doubtful experiment in Christian politics. They must be at least unconsciously aware that the present condition is intolerable and that they must either manage to have the law enforced or permit it to be amended. But as a matter of fact they will do neither. They take advantage of the formidable political obstacles to any change in the law in order to stand pat and reaffirm their faith in an experiment whose actual results are so hideously disappointing.

By exercising their rights and spending their authority in this way they are exposing the poverty of their Christianity and they are discrediting their spiritual leadership. It is calamitous to have the prestige of the Protestant clergyman in this country dissipated and cheapened by being mobilized in support of a piece of social legislation which experience has proved to be intrinsically doubtful and necessarily insincere—insincere, that is, not on the part of the clergymen themselves, but on the part of their political and lay associates. If these reverend gentlemen were solicitous of the spiritual values which are actually compromised by the social and moral consequences of prohibition, they would pray, not for the defeat of Governor Smith, but for the imperilled souls of those millions of respectable citizens who patronize bootleggers and vote for the prohibitionist candidate. The ignoring and even the condoning by Protestant clergymen of this personal hypocrisy and double-dealing is a perfect illustration of the danger of trying to vindicate by ecclesiastical or religious authority an essentially contentious assertion of political opinion. Their behavior introduces confusion into politics, but what is worse, it commits the professors of religion to the double standard, to the subordination

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of moral sincerity to political advantage. They are worshipping at the shrine of Cæsar, not at the shrine of God, the Father. If the Lord of Hosts had any command to issue to the American people with respect to the coming election, it would be to order American citizens who break the prohibition law and will not publicly confess and repent, to vote for Al Smith, and every Protestant cleric to instruct them that such is the path of righteousness for them.

The New Republic is not trying to justify any one decision with respect to prohibition or any choice with respect to the two presidential candidates as the religious or Christian decision or choice. From the religious point of view, what really counts is the bearing of any particular act or choice on the momentum and direction of the individual's whole belief and on its growth or lack of growth. Prohibition is a question of personal conduct which for better or worse has been made a matter of politics. Conscientious and sincerely religious people may differ about it, and any individual citizen, since he must act about it as well as vote, may properly and even desirably find his vote determined by religious motives. But having become chiefly a political question, it has to be fought out and eventually settled as the result of political processes, and if religious values are to enter into the decision, the people who apply them are under some obligation to take account, not only of the poposed object of the policy, but of the moral processes whereby the political object is achieved. Now from the point of view of religious values the art of politics is afflicted with one grave fault. It is much more interested in devising successful methods of getting results than it is in scrutinizing the reaction of these successful methods on the moral welfare of people who participate in them. On the other hand, it is precisely the reaction of political methods on the moral education of politically active individuals which should most concern their fellow-citizens who are consciously acting from religious motives. Mr. Hoover is a politician engaged in picking up votes how and where he can, but Christian clergymen who are exerting their religious authority in order to recruit votes for him cannot afford to ignore the moral quality of the choice which they are urging their flocks to take. If they treat one vote as if it were as good as another and urge an obedient Christian to elect a prohibitionist candidate in spite of the fact that he is violating the law which he and they, for alleged reasons, wish to perpetuate, then they are not vindicating religious truth by their political activities. They are prostituting it. They are not uplifting politics by putting religion into them. They are cheapening religion by subordinating it to the alleged necessities of politics. If they are to be forgiven or excused, it is because they know not what they do.

An End to Speculation?

THE address of Col. Leonard P. Ayres before the annual convention of the American Bankers' Association was of interest to those concerned with the temporary situation of stock-exchange inflation and absorption of credit, and also to those looking at the longer future. There is no question that his diagnosis of the stock market is correct—the high prices are due more to "invincible optimism" of the speculators than to any sound basis for that optimism. Now the anticipation of unlimited profits has turned upon the stock market, "when prices of the stocks of mail order houses, *chain stores, motor companies and soft-drink firms* are selling on a basis to yield half as much as the obligations of the United States government. . . . Representative groups of industrial shares are now selling at prices literally twice as high as similar stocks have ever sold before at the tops of the most excited of previous bull markets." Obviously such a situation will not endure.

Scoffers will undoubtedly point out that Colonel Ayres has previously predicted a fall of stocks which did not occur. The principal reason it did not occur was, of course, that so many who had access to funds with which to buy did not agree with him. Perhaps there will be enough who now disagree so that stocks will be carried still further, for a time. No purely economic prediction can gauge the extent of public infatuation. But there can be no question that a purely speculative bubble will sometime burst, unless something unforeseen occurs to sustain the inflated values. Better informed and more convinced investors for the rise may point out that this is just where prophecies such as that of Colonel Ayres are weak. Expanding business and enlarged profits therefrom have, for a few years, steadily increased the underlying values of leading securities, and enlarged their yield to a point where a speculative rise has been justified. This may occur again. A pertinent reply to this argument would be to point out that at the present moment the enormous total of loans to brokers, which are sustaining stock values, arises largely from the unused money resources of corporations, who cannot make as much profit by putting that money into expanded production as they can by lending it to persons who are speculating on the expectation of expanded production. For this reason, and because the high money rates discourage expansion by other business men who have to borrow, still greater prosperity is not likely until the speculators are disappointed.

But the significance of Colonel Ayres' remarks concerning the long future is of greater moment. He implies that a large part of the industrial prosperity of the past few years has been due to an influx of gold into this country, with its accompaniment of easy credit. Now we have lost much of this gold, and are not likely permanently to regain it. Therefore, assuming that his diagnosis of pros-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

perity is correct, expansion of industry is not likely to be so rapid over a considerable period.

The part which low interest rates and abundant credit have played in the economic history of recent years in the United States is believed to be large by other authorities also, notably Dr. B. M. Anderson, Jr., of the Chase National Bank. This part, it is contended, is often overlooked, because the easy credit has not resulted in any marked inflation of the ordinary type such as we experienced in 1919 and 1920, with soaring commodity prices. Nevertheless, it has contributed to the long-sustained building boom, now apparently receding because the effective demand has been so fully supplied. It has facilitated the easy absorption of a host of securities which have led to many extensions of plant and equipment. And it has financed the tremendous growth of instalment credit, by which the cash purchasing power of individual consumers has been pieced out by loans against future income. To the extent to which these important activities would be restricted by more cautious extension of bank credit, a failure of the gold supply to increase as in the past would, indeed, lead to a slower growth for American business.

Dr. Ayres states that "the great rewards of business and banking during the next decade will probably go to the plodders rather than to the plotters, to the calculators instead of to the speculators, to the thrifty and not to the shifty." This prompts a little rumination as to the probable conditions of success, in the above eventuality, not merely for the individual, but also for the plodding, calculating and thrifty nation. What can we substitute, as a national economic virtue, for a great horde of gold and an unbounded and careless optimism?

If all that were needed to turn the wheels of industry at an ever-increasing pace were continually expanding credit, the answer would be easy. Disjoin credit from its basis of the gold reserve entirely, permit its continued expansion at a rate adjusted to our increasing physical capacity to produce goods, and get rid of the incubus about to be imposed by an inadequate bank reserve. But the solution is not so easy as this, and to state it indicates that even if the gold supply had continued to increase world without end, we should probably have run into difficulties some time.

Economists with their eyes on the concrete world of exchange rather than on academic theory have already pointed out some of these difficulties. One is, that capital and labor are often wasted by being directed in unnecessarily large amounts into industries whose product cannot, in the nature of things, be absorbed in increasing quantities as rapidly as the output is expanded. One of these industries is coal. Another is agriculture—in many of its staple lines. A third is cotton textiles. The list might easily be extended. One job before a prudent nation would therefore be properly to organize overdeveloped and over-competitive industries, and to prevent too much investment in them. A complementary job would be to use the surplus capital, not socially demanded for such industries, in other channels which would increase national prosperity, such as development of cheap and widespread electric power, good housing and town planning for those of small income, conservation of natural resources.

A thrifty nation would also minimize the loss of labor power through unemployment, and would indemnify the unemployed so that their effective demand might not be entirely removed from the market. It would, furthermore, reckon with the fact that an expansion of instalment credit cannot forever be counted upon to substitute for the purchasing power of insufficient cash incomes. It would turn its attention, therefore, to every measure which might enlarge the real incomes of the bulk of the population as rapidly as the power to produce goods improved. This would mean farm relief, it would mean tangible encouragement to labor organization and collective bargaining, it would mean control of the prices and profits of monopolistic industries selling essentials.

Better coördination all around, eliminating waste in every direction, would be essential for a nation devoted to calculation instead of speculation. Indeed, this prescription might be enlarged to include an extensive and well conceived program of social control of industry—such a program, for instance, as was recently set forth by a committee of the Liberal party in England, in "Britain's Industrial Future."

Will the time come in the United States, when useful and solid plodding of this type will supersede our present happy-go-lucky mood? If so, the boasted achievements of our present adventitious prosperity may look puny indeed. For we have the natural resources, the technical skill, and the energy to produce a national well being which need not take fright at the possible scarcity of a single yellow metal, but can create a prosperity for everyone which at present is beyond the dreams of any except a favored few.

THE NEW REPUBLIC

PUBLISHED WEEKLY AND COPYRIGHT, 1928, IN THE U. S., BY THE NEW REPUBLIC, INC., 421 WEST 21ST STREET, NEW YORK
HERBERT CROLY, PRESIDENT, DANIEL MEBANE, TREASURER

EDITORS

HERBERT CROLY BRUCE BLIVEN GEORGE SOULE
EDMUND WILSON STARK YOUNG R. M. LOVETT

ASSISTANT EDITOR: T. S. MATTHEWS

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

JANE ADDAMS JOHN DEWEY WALDO FRANK
ALVIN JOHNSON E. C. LINDEMAN ROBERT LITTELL
LEWIS MUMFORD GILBERT SELDES R. G. TUGWELL
LEO WOLMAN ELINOR WYLIE

RATES: SINGLE COPIES, FIFTEEN CENTS; YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION, FIVE DOLLARS; CANADIAN, FIVE DOLLARS AND FIFTY CENTS; FOREIGN, SIX DOLLARS; THREE MONTHS' TRIAL, ONE DOLLAR

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Why I Am for Smith

ECCLESIASTICAL domination of American thought, habits, and political institutions has become a major issue in the current campaign. The menace is not from Rome, for the Pope is as far removed from American affairs in the present era of the Ku Klux Klan as he was in the former days of the Know Nothings. The danger is from the Protestant Churches, the pulpits of which throughout the nation are being turned into political rostrums. The Baptist and Methodist Churches are already officially engaged in a campaign of vilification of Governor Smith, and every other non-Catholic denomination is in greater or less degree being summoned to action. Mrs. Mabel W. Willebrandt—successively appointee, protégé, and defender of the sainted Harry Daugherty—sounded the tocsin for the Methodists, but the political parsons as a whole needed no such call; Cannon, Straton, and others already had taken to the lists. The attack on Governor Smith is based on his "wetness," his Tammany affiliations, his Catholicism—but the greatest of these is his Catholicism. That the Protestant Churches should be easily victimized by so transparent a politician as Mrs. Willebrandt and by such an obvious circus-performer as John Roach Straton would be amusing were it not so tragic. Protestantism in the United States has surrendered to the alleged Roman offense of interfering in affairs of the State: it is confusing God and Cæsar. Even more, it is menacing both Christianity and American institutions. It threatens this country with a rule of fanaticism and bigotry which in the end will overwhelm every dissenter, as well as every Jew and other non-Christian. Let those beware who wish to see freedom of religious belief, and freedom to hold no religious belief, survive in the United States! The present campaign of the Protestant Churches against Governor Smith is not only un-Christian, but un-American.

Bishop Cannon, Mr. Straton, and the Ku Klux Klan protest that their principal objection to Governor Smith is not his Catholicism, but his alleged alliance with liquor. No one who examines their statements or who understands the frame of mind of political Protestantism will admit that such is the case. It cannot be denied by the opponents of Governor Smith that the liquor traffic in the United States is the bootlegger traffic—one of the most highly organized businesses in the country. Hoover will get the bootlegger vote. What the bootleggers want is not modification of the Volstead Act—which would abolish their lucrative trade, as the Eighteenth Amendment abolished the saloon—but continued lax enforcement and a commission to investigate laboriously into the "constructive working out" of this great "social and economic experiment."

The attack on Tammany Hall, supposedly in the interest of good government, is another instance of intolerance. It is directed primarily against the cosmopolitanism and the extraordinary growth of the city of New York. As it was once fashionable to denounce New York as the creature of Wall Street, it is now popular to picture it as the tool of Fourteenth Street. To be sure, Tammany Hall is not an exemplary American institution; its record is dark gray where it is not black. But not since the days of Tweed has Tammany Hall been guilty of corruption even remotely approaching that of Daugherty, Fall, Doheny, Hays, Sinclair, Miller and Forbes; Mr. Hoover—cabinet colleague of some of the worst of the culprits—was a silent and complacent witness of the vandalism of the Ohio Gang, whereas New York City had the decency to send Tweed to the penitentiary. It is a fact, furthermore, that New York under Tammany Hall enjoys perhaps the best government of any large city in the United States—certainly it is less wet than Detroit, less corrupt than Philadelphia, less lawless than Chicago; the latter cities are dominated by unreformed Republican machines of the old Tammany type, and all are now enthusiastically supporting Mr. Hoover for the presidency. It cannot be contended that Tammany Hall has controlled the government of the state of New York during the four terms of Smith's governorship; under Smith, for example, the State Highway Department—long the center of political patronage, log-rolling, graft, and "highwaymen"—has for the first time been honestly administered. New York State, through the leadership of Governor Smith and other "Tammany" legislators, is now privileged to claim the most enlightened code of industrial and social legislation in the Union. Governor Smith and Mayor Walker, knowing that it would cost the Democratic ticket perhaps thousands of votes in the coming election, have nevertheless initiated a vigorous criminal prosecution against the Connolly machine in Queens. In contrasting Smith's aggressiveness against Connolly with Mr. Hoover's silence on the corruption of the Harding administration, one is reminded of Lincoln's remark when he was told that General Grant was drinking too much: "I can't spare this man; he fights."

The embattled clergymen, if the truth be known, are much confused in their own minds concerning their opposition to Al Smith. They justify their anti-Catholicism by calling it opposition to liquor and Tammany. They even drag in the time-honored issue of the "bloody shirt." An Episcopal

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

clergyman in the up-state town in which I now reside injected into his sermon a remark the substance of which is as follows: "The pulpit is no place to discuss politics, but I should just like to ask who rendered more service in the Great War than Herbert Hoover." If the flag must be waved, one may answer readily, "Any private soldier serving in the front-line trenches in France"; thousands of those rendering this great service were American Catholics, and no small number of them were friends of Tammany Hall. But whatever was Mr. Hoover's war-time record, he has turned his back upon it. Eight years ago I worked to secure the nomination of Mr. Hoover by either of the major parties, believing that he was the outstanding man to deal with the pressing problems of reconstruction; today I believe that his influence on international relations is more pernicious than that of any other important figure in Washington. Co-worker and supporter of Woodrow Wilson, Mr. Hoover has deserted for partisan reasons every cause, including the League of Nations, for which Wilson stood. Abandoning his world outlook, he has become an apostle of narrow nationalism, and repeats moth-eaten slogans concerning world trade which would have shamed William McKinley or Mark Hanna. In his fantastic rubber-war of five years ago against Great Britain, he bore all the ear-marks of an irresponsible and credulous jingo. By committing himself to the big-navy men he has demonstrated that he is not the man who should be charged by the American people with the revision of the Washington treaties for the limitation of armament. If the United States wishes to become the foremost exponent of mercantilism and imperialism, Herbert Hoover is the man to have in the White House. He has strong ideas on international affairs, most of which are prejudiced, superannuated, or inaccurate.

There is a curious unholy alliance in this campaign between religious bigotry and social snobbery. Al Smith, it is said, is not a college graduate. He is provincial, his mental and political horizon being the borders of the state of New York. He is of humble origin and once worked in a fish-market. His wife is not skilled in the social graces which are required of the "first lady of the land." Shades of the past! What has happened to the America which gloried in the progress of Jackson, Harrison, Lincoln and Garfield "from log cabin to White House"? Why were arguments of this sort not advanced against Warren G. Harding in 1920? The answer is obvious—the voters of this country, particularly, alas, the women, are rationalizing their religious and social prejudices. Al Smith's experience in dealing with men and women and with the machinery of government is far more to be desired than the education acquired today in many of our country-club colleges, with their ranking football teams, expensive fraternities, and elaborate side-shows. There is nothing provincial in being Governor for four terms of a state which contains one-tenth of the population of the Union, which possesses the greatest seaport in the world, and which has faced in the past twenty-five years of Smith's political experience every important problem of agriculture, industry, transportation, and social welfare. Those who, in the coming election, vote for Mr. and Mrs. Hoover for reasons of education and "culture" are the sort of persons who would have voted against Andrew Jackson in 1828; would have supported Seward rather than Lincoln for the Republican nomination in 1860; would have rallied to Stephen A. Douglas or to Jefferson Davis on the eve of the Civil War.

The election of just a century ago holds some interesting lessons for those who consider education and social prestige important issues in this campaign. The candidates in 1828 were John Quincy Adams and Andrew Jackson. Adams was a son of the second President of the United States, a member of one of the most distinguished families in American history; like his father, he was educated at Harvard; he had presided over the American legations at St. Petersburg and London; he had been head of the American commission which negotiated peace with Great Britain in 1814; he had served as Secretary of State under President Monroe, and one term as President in his own right. Jackson was an uneducated, lawless, radical frontiersman—hard-drinking, hard-swearing, and quick-shooting. He was slovenly in his appearance; his political experience had been marked principally by military violence; he knew nothing about foreign affairs; he had killed a man in a duel, and had participated in unseemly brawls; he was supported by Tammany Hall and the "rabble" generally; his wife smoked a corn-cob pipe and was accused of having had illicit relations with Jackson before their marriage. Here the issue was sharply drawn. Every former President, except Washington, had been college-trained; it was proposed to profane the White House with a Jackson when an Adams was available. Although aristocratic Virginia had to "hold its nose" during the campaign, Jackson won. He carried his frontier manners with him to his inauguration, and in the famous Peggy Eaton affair he indicated clearly that snobbery would be no part of his system of society at the White House. Yet he was one of our great Presidents.

What were Lincoln's qualifications for the presidency, judged by the standards arbitrarily set up by the opponents of Al Smith? Lincoln came from the humblest of surroundings; he rose to greatness from the dirt floor of a log cabin; for a long time he earned his living with his hands and was none too successful at his subsequent professions of storekeeper and lawyer; when asked for material for a campaign biography he said truthfully that it would be nothing but "the short and simple annals of the poor." Like Al Smith, he had histrionic abilities and sometimes played the clown; hence he was considered to lack the dignity essential, in the minds of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

some, to high office. Although he was religious, he never joined a church and could not formally be called a Christian; twenty of the twenty-three clergymen in Springfield, his home town, were opposed in 1860 to putting any such man in the White House, and Lincoln himself said that most of the church-members of his community were going to cast their votes elsewhere. Lincoln's personal appearance was far from reassuring; his dress was slovenly and unconventional; an English diarist said that he was "not what is called a 'gentleman.'" His supporters at the Chicago convention of 1860 were by no means spotless, and the methods which secured his nomination savored of the horse-trade.

Like Smith, then, Lincoln was considered by his contemporaries of the upper classes to be socially and politically unsuited for the White House. He, too, was the victim of an extensive "whispering campaign." His wife was labelled a small-town belle, totally unfit to be "first lady of the land"; Stephen A. Douglas' wife was of the Southern aristocracy. Before and after his election Lincoln received scurrilous letters calling him an ape and a baboon, "a satyr, a Negro, a mulatto, a buffoon, a monster, an abortion, an idiot," and threatening him with all sorts of personal violence. It was freely predicted that this Black Republican—the Republicans then did not enjoy such a plenitude of respectability—would never be inaugurated; a bullet would stop his progress to Washington and the White House.

Like Jackson, Al Smith is courageous and intuitively right in his political judgments. Like Lincoln, he has unlimited capacity for growth. He deserves support. But hundreds of thousands of honest men and women will vote for Hoover in the coming election, overlooking the larger considerations. On the Hoover bandwagon they will find themselves associated with bootleggers and evangelical clergymen; William Randolph Hearst and the Ku Klux Klan; the corrupt Republican machine in the South and the remnants of the Ohio Gang; Vare and Big Bill Thompson, exponents of bigger and better plunder in municipal government; C. Bascom Slemp, last of the carpet-baggers; John Roach Straton, Billy Sunday, Aimée McPherson, Bishop Cannon; the W. C. T. U., the Anti-Saloon League and the religious fundamentalists; the power interests, headed by Insull; the big-navy men, in support of a Quaker who would have us swagger along the world's highways. What a spectacle! And the enemies of Smith have the temerity to cry, "Rum, Romanism, and Tammany Hall!"

EDWARD MEAD EARLE.

Mr. Hoover on Power Control

THUS far in the campaign, Mr. Hoover has maintained complete silence on a problem second to none in importance to the future well-being of the country—how to safeguard the public interest in the development of our electric power resources. Here is a subject within the field of Mr. Hoover's special interest and experience.

Perhaps before the close of the campaign he will choose to educate the public mind upon this problem. The more is this to be wished, since Mr. Hoover's past record on this issue reveals a significant shift of attitude. To this record, then, until he discloses his present mind, attention is invited.

In October, 1923, before the Superpower Conference, Mr. Hoover took this position:

> I am not here to advocate federal super-regulation of interstate movement of power. I believe that power development and distribution would find its greatest solution in coördinated state regulation, perhaps with assistance and coöperation of the federal government, rather than in any super-structure of authority such as has been found necessary in transportation unless, of course, necessities of the case cannot be attained otherwise. (Reprinted in Beman, Superpower, pp. 59-60.)

These views he elaborated in 1924 in his address before the National Electric Light Association:

> But today through longer transmission and interconnection the state boundaries in power distribution are disappearing. Moreover, the control of much of our water resources lies in the federal government and their distribution must move across state lines. . . . We cannot secure superpower development unless there is a free flow of power across state lines. We have thus at once created, at least, a physical and economic interstate question. . . . Federal regulation is not the road to solution of these problems of interstate movement of power. I would regard any federal regulation such as has been found necessary in transportation as a disaster to the development of our power resources. The fact is slowly emerging that the United States will eventually divide itself into several power districts, each with its own problems. Problems relating to the origin of power, problems of climate, problems relating to the character of industries and uses. No national regulation can supply that intimate knowledge of local problems which this industry requires. I believe that power development and distribution would find its greatest solution in coördinated state regulation, perhaps with voluntary assistance from the federal government in securing this coördination. We need interconnection between state utility commissions where conflicting questions arise. (1924 N. E. L. A. Proc. p. 124.)

In both these statements, Mr. Hoover's scheme for regulation is that of "coördinated state regulation, perhaps with assistance and coöperation of the federal government." This formula derives meaning when placed in the context of contemporary events. It was a time when use of the "com-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

pact" provision in the federal Constitution—agreements between states with the consent of Congress—was urged by Governor Pinchot and his "giant power" associates. Mr. Hoover's experience as chairman of the Colorado River Commission, which had formulated the Colorado River Compact, had made him familiar with the legal mechanism of compact. Plainly in his utterances in 1923 and 1924, Mr. Hoover had in mind some such device for securing unified state action. The reference to "assistance and coöperation of the federal government" suggests the consent required of Congress to effective state action through compact. Mr. Hoover was concerned with power regions larger than the individual states, and he was mindful of the need of legal control coterminous with the geographical power regions.

In 1925, speaking to the National Electric Light Association, Mr. Hoover begins to talk differently:

> . . . It is my belief from this investigation that the public service commissions with very little just criticism are proving themselves fully adequate to control the situation. *The laws as written in the state statute books are sufficient to protect both the public and the industry, the two parties to the utility contract.* . . . The essence of regulation lies in a tight grip on the concern that actually deals with the consumer. There is the possibility that generating concerns may sell their power wholesale at the state line to distributing companies, thus attempting to make their wholesale prices exempt from the regulation of the consuming state. But that state still regulates the price and service of the distributing company. Most commissions exercise supervision of the contracts for purchase of power. The commissions are unlikely to blindly accept as an item of cost the amount paid to an external transmission company for its power, but rather they will examine the cost and reject it as a basic element if found unfair or excessive or collusive. I commend this view to the careful consideration of the state commissions. The utilities themselves would do well not to oppose it. It would create the only gap justifying federal intervention. For the rest, coöperation between commissions would settle the possible minor questions. . . . Central generation and interconnection do not in any way alter the essential character of regulation. [Italics are mine.] (1925 N. E. L. A. Proc. pp. 151-152.)

Later, in October, 1925, addressing the National Association of Railroad and Utilities Commissioners, he was still more emphatic as to the adequacy of existing state regulation, and he rejected the idea of interstate compact. For him now only two types of "legal interstate problems" called for solution. And for these he found ample answer in existing state machinery:

> Furthermore, there has been considerable exaggeration of the probable extent of interstate power. For economic reasons these power districts in but few cases will reach across state lines. There will be interconnection between systems of different states, but even including this traffic, the proportion of actual interstate movement in power to the intrastate movement will be comparatively small. At the present time less than 4 percent of the power developed passes state lines. . . .
>
> Thus we see that 96 percent of the whole of this interstate bogie can be dismissed upon economic analysis of the facts. The other 4 percent lies in the legal field. And legal interstate problems can only arise where the activities of the operating companies extend beyond state lines. I am advised by our legal staff there will be two cases of this kind: first, where the same company is engaged in generation and distribution over a district embracing parts of two or more states, and second, where an operating company purchases power generated in a foreign state—the latter instance also embracing the "interconnection" between districts lying in different states. As to the first series of cases to which I have referred, it has been well established by the courts in analogous instances that the state commissions have the power and authority to establish "reasonable rates" to their consumers whether the property may be wholly within the state or not. These cases take care today of the 4 percent of the total power passing our state line.
>
> Thus we again further reduce this whole assertion by, say, 98 percent. There remains, therefore, a small fraction of the problem to dispose of, and the second case, where the distributing company buys power by interconnection or otherwise from outside the state. Here the question is simply as to whether the rate paid by the distributing company for the purchased power is reasonable. If unreasonable, the commission may refuse to allow the full amount in settling the rate base for consumers. It is open to the state commission to fix a rate for resale to consumers within its jurisdiction based upon what the commission considers a fair price, the companies having the usual recourse to the courts for redress against injustice.
>
> It is difficult to conceive of a situation which, as far as public interest goes, could not be controlled in this simple and effective manner. It needs no new machinery, no complicated interstate compacts, between each of forty-eight states and its numerous neighbors, requiring sanction by Congress. (Reported in 1926 N. E. L. A. Proc. 297, 299.)

Gone is the vision entertained by Secretary Hoover in his Annual Report to Congress in 1924, of a "liquidity of power over whole groups of states," of power distribution spreading "across state lines and into diverse jurisdictions," of the emergence of "new legal problems in states' rights and federal relations to power distribution" (Report of Secretary of Commerce to Congress, 1924, p. 14). No new machinery is needed now or in the recognizable future! These are the Hoover views, so the Federal Trade Commission inquiry has just revealed, which the power lobby widely disseminated.

There was, said Mr. Hoover, "considerable exaggeration of the probable extent of interstate power." There was exaggeration—exaggeration by Mr. Hoover as to the limited scope of interstate power. For 1926, the power transmitted across state

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

lines was about double the amount indicated by Mr. Hoover the year before. The interstate transmission of power in 1926 amounted to 9.06 percent, not including 1,127,073,793 kilowatt hours that crossed the Canadian and Mexican boundaries. During the same year, instead of power districts reaching across state lines in few cases, more than 453 transmission lines crossed state boundaries. Instead of the greater part of interstate transmission constituting power of the same company engaged in generation and distribution over a district embracing more than one state, only 26.28 percent of the total interstate power involved no change in ownership. Instead of interconnection between different systems in different states being negligible, *i. e.,* the interchange of power for special markets created by load demands or generating conditions of a temporary character, this interchange power represented 16.7 percent of the interstate power (See Bulletin No. 68 of the Bureau of Business Research, Harvard University, "Interstate Transmission of Power by Electric Light and Power Companies in 1926").

Mr. Hoover's proneness to inaccurate statistics, as shown in his Newark speech figures on unemployment, is further manifested when he deals with utility earnings. In his 1925 address he gives the return on investment of electric utility companies as less than or about 6 percent during 1924. The report of the Federal Trade Commission found the rate on the total net investment "7.94 percent, or approximately 8 percent" (See Sen. Doc. No. 213, p. xxiii, 69th Cong., 2nd Sess.). This difference between 6 percent and 7.94 percent is a difference of millions of dollars, and may be the difference between confiscation and reasonable return.

Mr. Hoover now sees the problem of control over electric transmission between states as one limited solely to rate-fixing. The various problems at which he hinted in 1923 and 1924 have evaporated. Problems of service, of accounting methods as a basis of adequate inspection, of standardization for purposes of efficiency, of extended development, of industrial relations, have now no concern for him. According to the later Mr. Hoover, "It is difficult to conceive of a situation which, as far as public interest goes, could not be controlled in this simple and effective manner" [*i. e.,* existing state regulation]. Those familiar with the legal problems here involved will be bound to dissent from Mr. Hoover's assurance. Some of the gravest difficulties of power regulation have not been, nor can they be, met merely by individual state regulation. Suppose the X company engaged in interstate transmission of power refuses to make an interconnection with town A near its interstate transmission line, what existing state authorities could compel such interconnection in the public interest? Suppose the same company had heretofore supplied an independent distributing company in the town of B, and finding a more profitable market elsewhere, ceased to supply that town with power generated from without the state in which B was located, what state authority could compel the X company to continue to supply town B?

At the very time that Mr. Hoover so confidently relied on the adequacy of state regulation, court decisions had already demonstrated the incapacity of a single state to control interstate transmission of power. In Missouri vs. Kansas Gas Company, decided May 26, 1924 (265 U. S. 298), the Supreme Court had held that where a gas company distributed natural gas which it produced and bought in Oklahoma and Kansas to independent distributing companies in Kansas and Missouri, neither Kansas nor Missouri could regulate the rates at which the company supplied gas to the independent distributing companies in the respective states. In Attleboro Steam and Electric Company vs. Public Utilities Commission, the Rhode Island Supreme Court, on June 18, 1925 (46 R. I. 496), decided that the state was without power to regulate the rate charged by a Rhode Island generating and transmitting company for electricity sold to a distributing Massachusetts company at the state line, even though the Rhode Island Utilities Commission sought to compel the increase of this rate so as to enable the Rhode Island company, by eliminating its losses on the interstate transmission of power, to serve its customers in Rhode Island at reasonable rates. Later, on January 3, 1927, the United States Supreme Court sustained the Rhode Island Court (275 U. S. 83). That interstate power must be regulated by agencies transcending existing state machinery can no longer be open to dispute, except by those who are opposed to any kind of effective regulation.

But not even within the narrow field of rate regulation, in which alone Mr. Hoover conceded problems for solution, is the existing state machinery adequate. His opinion as to the efficacy of state control, in cases where the same company generates, transmits, and distributes electric power across a state line (which represents less than 27 percent instead of more than 50 percent of power, as he intimates) rests upon the decision of the Supreme Court in Pennsylvania Gas Company vs. Public Service Commission, decided March 1, 1920 (252 U. S. 23). That case involved the distribution of interstate natural gas by a Pennsylvania corporation directly to consumers located in several New York towns. The Court upheld regulation of the rates by the New York State Commission for gas furnished to consumers in one of these towns. There are plain differences between such a case and that of interstate electrical power transmission and distribution. The transmission and distribution of natural gas are subject to limitations not applicable to electricity. The area of electrical distribution far exceeds the area of gas distribution. Such differ-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ences become decisively significant in constitutional adjudications, where, as in the Pennsylvania Gas Case, the basis for state control was found in the fact that the distribution was "local" and "in such a case," the Supreme Court ruled, "the local interest is paramount, and the interference with interstate commerce, if any, indirect and of minor importance."

In the second class of rate regulation for which Mr. Hoover finds state regulation adequate, there seems to be no foundation whatever in authority for the availability of the state control upon which he relies. The state, under the adjudicated cases, has no control over the rate charged by the interstate transmitting company. Neither has the distributing company. It has to pay the rate the former charges. It has no option, for, practically, it cannot purchase from anyone else. How can the state in regulating the rate for distribution reject as an item of cost the rate at which the distributing company has to purchase its power, even though both the state commission and the distributing company regard that rate as unreasonably high? Whether high or not, it does represent an item of cost, and if the state commission rejected this item of cost in its rate-fixing, and proceeded on the basis of a hypothetical item of cost, how long would such rate-fixing stand the test of confiscation under the due-process clause? No legal authority sustains such a proposal. Instead, the Attleboro Case, by denying the state any direct control over the rate charged the distributing company, by implication denies the state such indirect control, if, as Mr. Hoover asserts, the indirect control would be just as effective. Furthermore, in the absence of power on the part of a state commission to examine into the conduct of the business of the interstate transmitting company, how can a state commission reach any adequate conclusions as to the reasonableness of the rate charged by it for its service?

But the great defect of Mr. Hoover's later attitude is his failure to recognize that interstate electrical transmission of power has other and deeper problems of control than mere rate regulation. The long-range planning demanded for an adequate superpower system to bring about Mr. Hoover's "liquidity of power over whole groups of states," demands control in the public interest if it is not to be wholly haphazard in character. Without the control of adequate public safeguards, power development will repeat the disastrous history of transportation development—overcapitalization, wasteful competition, needless duplication of equipment, receiverships, undesirable consolidations, instead of a directed development of the generation, transmission and distribution of power.

In recent years federal *vs.* state regulation has greatly agitated the electrical industry. It is uncompromisingly against federal regulation; it is equally opposed to effective state or regional control. The power interests defeated Governor Pinchot's efforts towards wider state regulation in Pennsylvania; they defeated Governor Smith's power program in New York; the Insull interests resisted Governor Brewster's plan for coöperative state regulation in Maine. Whatever may have led to Mr. Hoover's shift of attitude, in result he champions the immunities demanded by the power interests. One thing is clear: instead of Mr. Hoover educating the electrical industry, the power interests have educated Mr. Hoover.

FELIX FRANKFURTER.

The Seed Shop

IT WAS a Fifth Avenue seed shop.

The man out-of-town walked in.

"Good morning, sir," said the clerk.

He wore a morning coat.

He had the soul of an artist.

"Good morning," said the customer. "I want a few things for my garden."

"A wheelbarrow, sir?" suggested the clerk. "Some nice wheelbarrows this morning. Tudor sport-model. Find it quite comfortable. Robin's-egg blue. Very smart for the front lawn. Balloon tire and spare."

"Not a wheelbarrow," said the customer.

"A spade, perhaps. Gorgeous implement. Convenient size. Damascus steel. Chippendale handle. Just the thing for digging lilies."

"Not a spade," said the customer.

"Ah! something smaller. A trowel. We have Italian trowels. Inlay blade; hilt designed for Catherine de' Medici. Effective in soft soil."

"Not a trowel," said the customer.

"Pruning knife, sir? Very cultural. Used on the most exclusive prune ranches in California."

"No, no," said the customer, with the prickly heat of impatience. "Not that."

"A sparrow bath, sir? Persian marble. Open face. Waters of Babylon. Thrushes, too. Nothing lovelier of a morning than a thrush in the bath."

"No thrushes," said the customer.

"A sundial, then. Early Colonial. Fluted pedestal. Gothic gnomon. *Vénus couchante*. Lights and shadows. Salient addition, sir, to bed of orchids or a crescent of glub*jullas*."

"No, no," whispered the customer, running a handkerchief over his beady brow.

"Trellis, sir? Very attractive. Irresistible to vines. Swarm over them, sir. Clematis, honeysuckle, sweet-pea. Tangle-foot, ramblers. Caprifoliaceous. Stand on their own feet. Fancy that, sir. Blue morning, humming-birds, glitter of wings. Evening, plash of fountain, sunset, trellis, twitter of birds. A picture, sir."

"No, no!"

"No? *Very* well, sir. A sprinkler, maybe. One that revolves. Lateral arms. See them on the links. Spiral spray. Forty feet. Soft as dew. Good for

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the soil. Refreshing. Grow daisies on the sidewalk. Extra nozzle. Hammered bronze. The clear jet. A turn of the wrist. Gardener's delight.

"You're *all* right, sir?

"A reel of hose, perhaps. Sinuous. Serpentine. Convulsive. Any size, any length. Avon hose. A child can pull it. Tie it in knots. Ever drunk out of a hose, sir? Fine flavor. Sweet as Hippocrene. Cure the hiccoughs. Universal thread. Attach it anywhere: fire-plug, aquarium, rain-barrel, cider-jug. Preferably a faucet."

The customer moistened his lips.

"A lawn-mower, you were about to say, sir? Attractive design. Gasoline motor. Spring seat. Shaven lawn. Gentle swells. Long vistas. Twenty miles an hour. Sweet odors. Zephyrs and all that. Lulls the gardener. Pleasure, sir, distinctly."

"No, no, I can't . . ." began the customer.

"*Price,* sir? *Very* reasonable. Think what you're getting. Rotary blades, spindle shaft, capacious tank, capital engine, dual control, rumble seat, whetstone, oil can, ignition, all thrown in. Demonstration in the Ritz lounge."

The clerk smiled engagingly.

The customer struggled to be himself.

"Seeds," he said.

"Seeds," echoed the clerk. "Bulbs from China. *Oignon,* French word. Emperor's palace. Come up in the spring. Marco Polo. Walled garden. Soft as hyacinth. Petals of jasper, leaves of jade. Bed of pebbles. Round the pool. Net of roots. Warm aroma. All imported.

"*One* moment, sir.

"Something from Holland. Rare article. Land of cheese. Bloom in March. Crocus and dahlia. Intelligent bulbs. *Festina lente.* Up too early. Periscope pistil. Sudden frost. Bulbs retreat. Triple tulips. Better than dykes. Flavor of country. Frozen canals. Silver skates. Windmills. Baggy trousers. All in a bulb, sir. Rather exclusive.

"*No,* sir?

"Fond of the water, sir? Care for lilies? Shady ponds. Lush growth. Heart of summer. Bloom for ladies. Bare arms. Ripples. Green canoe. Parted waves. Trailing fingers. Long stems. Incidental goldfish. Smarten the estate."

"Seeds," choked the customer.

His eyes burned wild.

"Ah, seeds," said the clerk. "Yellow grains. House of dust. Infinity in the palm of the hand. Black seeds, blue seeds. All colors. All flowers. Heliotrope, verbena, nasturtium, aster, snapdragon. Sown in the wind. Painting by Millet. Orderly rows. Official tone. Gay packages. Watch the birds. Sprinkle at dusk. Up in the morning. Bands of the spectrum. Cultivated rainbow. Envy of the *county,* sir.

"Suggestion for night, sir. Sunken garden. Bank of moonflowers. Starry sky. Clouds of mosquitoes. Stroll in the soft air. Petals unfolding. Kind of petunia. Nature at work. Romantic interval. Hands in the dark. Winking firefly. Prestige as a gardener. Thrill for the guest. Night-blooming cereus. Dawn disastrous. Flower folds up. Buds on the vine, sir. Lovely addition."

"My God, no!"

"I know, sir. I know, sir. Hardy perennials. Red peonies. Greek stem, sir. God of healing. Oval beds. Care in winter. Blanket of leaves. Rake them away. Tender shoots. Rank growth. Floral 'scutcheon. Brave display. Occasional peacock. We have them, sir. *Very* effective."

The customer swayed.

The end was near.

"Rose cuttings, sir? Only the finest. Some of them English. Burning sun. Deepening red. Ever read Masefield?"

"Vegetable seeds," breathed the customer.

His pulse was shifting.

"Vegetable seeds," repeated the clerk. "Should have told me. Very important. Nourish the country. Staple of life. Picturesque. Hardly decorative. *Fons et origo.* Eminent choice. Something in squash, sir? Shapes and sizes. Horizontal or vertical? Cylindrical bore. Fifty colors. Gourd and meerschaum. Green for the pasture. Yellow and beige. Touch of autumn. Wood smoke and leaves. Eye for symmetry? Acre of pumpkins. Grand dimension. Heavy as lead. Pile them like cannon balls. Set off the silo. Sight for the tourists.

"Something in eggplant, sir. Ebony finish. Pleasure to handle. Giant variety. Big as balloons. Gardeners love them. Personal pride. Feed them on potash. Entered at fairs. Break down the benches. Win all the prizes. Fry them in breadcrumbs. Delicious, sir, *delicious.*

"A suggestion, sir. Rather comical. Irish stew packet. Three in one. More than a trinity. Every ingredient. All but the beef. Popular in the outskirts, sir. Provides for the kitchen garden."

"I only wanted just a little . . ." interrupted the customer weakly.

It was his last stand.

He showed signs of collapse.

"Little?" said the clerk. "Little? Lettuce seed, sir. Fine as pepper. Eyeful of gossamer. Scatters like dust. Fuel for the fairies. Sow it in trenches. Mold and loam. Raised under glass. Careful transplanting. Delicate creature. Thumb and forefinger. Easy to bruise. Handling a moth's wings. Look out for rabbits. A measure of spinach. Vulgar but succulent. Popular dish. Hole in the package. Gone in a minute. Right for a field, sir."

The customer reeled.

"Nothing wrong, sir? Know the complaint. Big estate. Lots of worries. Spring is approaching. Acres and acres. What to plant. Difficult choice. Corn or lentils. Trying to help you, sir. Anything special?"

"I only wanted," sobbed the customer, "I only wanted some onion sets and a bit of parsley."

DAVID MCCORD.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

How They Will Vote

THE NEW REPUBLIC presents herewith the results of a little political straw vote of its own. A questionnaire was sent to several hundred persons who may fairly be described as intellectual, artistic or commercial leaders, asking them for what presidential candidate they intend to vote in November, and the replies are given below. A number of persons failed to reply, or asked that their preference should not be published. While we do not pretend that the list is a complete roster of persons of the classes indicated, it was carefully compiled and gives, we think, a fair cross-section of their opinion. The vote is interesting, we feel, because of the association of particular individuals with one choice or another, and not because of the total number registered for any candidate. An effort was made to exclude persons identified with political activities, and in only a few cases was the presidential preference of any individual known to the editors before the questionnaire was mailed. A few names have been added, of individuals whom the New Republic did not interrogate, who have recently made public statements elsewhere of their choice. This is particularly true of the business leaders, of whom, as will be seen, a large preponderance favor Hoover, as an equally large preponderance of the intellectuals favor Smith.

SMITH

Franklin P. Adams
Samuel Hopkins Adams
Sherwood Anderson
Gertrude Atherton
Ray Stannard Baker
Harry E. Barnes
Carl Becker
Franz Boas
Dr. A. A. Brill
Heywood Broun
Charles C. Burlingham
Katherine Newlin Burt
Struthers Burt
Zechariah Chafee, Jr.
Stuart Chase
W. L. Chenery
Morris R. Cohen
Seward B. Collins
Aaron Copland
Chester T. Crowell
Henry H. Curran
Elmer Davis
Clarence Darrow
John Dewey
Finley Peter Dunne
Pierre S. duPont
Edward M. Earle
John Erskine
Minnie Maddern Fiske
Bernard Flexner
Raymond B. Fosdick
Waldo Frank
Felix Frankfurter
James W. Gerard
Katherine Fullerton Gerould
Virginia C. Gildersleeve
Frank Gillmore
Susan Glaspell
Ruth Hale
Alice Hamilton
Norman Hapgood
Alfred Harcourt
Edward S. Harkness
Arthur Garfield Hays
Hamilton Holt
Arthur Hopkins
Sidney Howard
Hewitt H. Howland
Henry T. Hunt
Arthur Curtiss James
Owen Johnson
Robert Underwood Johnson
H. M. Kallen
Paul U. Kellogg
William H. Kilpatrick
Alfred A. Knopf
Gaston Lachaise
E. C. Lindeman
Anita Loos
Owen Lovejoy
Julian W. Mack
John Macy
Edgar Lee Masters
H. L. Mencken
Charles Merz
Edna St. Vincent Millay
Kathleen Millay
Alice Duer Miller
Gen. William Mitchell
Parker T. Moon
Henry Morgenthau
S. E. Morison
Lawrence S. Morris
Honore Willsie Morrow
William Morrow
Ethel Watts Mumford
George Jean Nathan
Adolph S. Ochs
W. F. Ogburn
Cornelia Stratton Parker
Dorothy Parker
Rosamond Pinchot
Walter H. Pollak
Thomas Reed Powell
Burton Rascoe
Paul Rosenfeld
Charles H. Sabin
A. M. Schlesinger
Mme Schumann-Heink
Ellery Sedgwick
Gertrude Matthews Shelby
Robert E. Sherwood
Mary Kingsbury Simkhovitch
Frank Simonds
Sumner H. Slichter
Eugene Speicher
Rudolph Spreckels
Laurence Stallings
Clarence S. Stein
Ida Tarbell
Deems Taylor
Horace Taylor
Augustus Thomas
A. E. Thomas
W. I. Thomas
William G. Thompson
Charles Hanson Towne
Henry Van Dyke
Mary Van Kleeck
Lillian D. Wald
T. K. Whipple
Mrs. Caspar Whitney
Thyra Samter Winslow
Stephen S. Wise
Alexander Woollcott

HOOVER

John E. Andrus
Mary Austin
Roger Babson
Edward Bok
Phillip Marshall Brown
Matthew C. Brush
Emory R. Buckner
Irving T. Bush
Carrie Chapman Catt
Walter P. Chrysler
Henry S. Coffin
Paul Cravath
Frank Crowninshield
Margaret Deland
Frank Doubleday
Alfred I. duPont
Will Durant
William C. Durant
George Eastman
Thomas A. Edison
W. H. P. Faunce
Irving Fisher
Henry Ford
Daniel Guggenheim
Briton Hadden
Howard Heinz
Ernest M. Hopkins
David Starr Jordan
Frederick A. Juilliard
Otto Kahn
Dr. Vernon Kellogg
R. P. Lamont
Thomas W. Lamont
J. Laurence Laughlin
Henry Goddard Leach
S. O. Levinson
E. H. Lindley
C. C. Little
Louis B. Mayer
Arthur E. Morgan
Charles Clayton Morrison
John R. Mott
J. C. Penny
G. P. Putnam
Mary Roberts Rinehart
George E. Roberts
Raymond Robins
Julius Rosenwald
Joseph Schenck
Mortimer L. Schiff
Alfred P. Sloan, Jr.
Otis Skinner

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

HOOVER *(Continued)*

Booth Tarkington	John B. Watson
Dr. M. Carey Thomas	Ray Lyman Wilbur
Edward L. Thorndike	Daniel Willard
M. J. Van Sweringen	Whiting Williams
O. P. Van Sweringen	Mary E. Woolley
Samuel Vauclain	William Wrigley, Jr.
Felix Warburg	B. F. Yoakum

THOMAS

Forrest Bailey	Freda Kirchwey
Poultney Bigelow	Fola La Follette
Paul Blanshard	Herbert Adolphus Miller
Howard Brubaker	A. J. Muste
Sarah N. Cleghorn	Kirby Page
George A. Coe	Stephen Raushenbush
Jerome Davis	John Nevin Sayre
Paul H. Douglas	Harry F. Ward
W. E. B. Du Bois	Bertha Poole Weyl
John Haynes Holmes	W. E. Woodward

Art Young

A number of individuals added to the expression of their choice interesting indications of the reasons for making it. Taking the Smithites first, we find Professor Morris R. Cohen adopting the suggestion for negative voting, by saying that he intends to vote for Smith "and against Hoover." What might be called "emphasized voting" is promised by Professor Edward Mead Earle, who says he intends "to vote most emphatically" for Smith—for reasons which he sets out at length in an article elsewhere in this issue. Henry T. Hunt, former Mayor of Cincinnati, promises not only to vote for Smith, but "to do all in my power toward his election." Professor William H. Kilpatrick of Columbia intends to vote for Smith "but regrets the wetness of it all." Arthur Garfield Hays says, "I intend to vote for Al Smith for President. Personally I should prefer Norman Thomas and I prefer the Socialist platform. I am voting for Smith, first, because I think it is important, if possible, to change the Republican regime, with the possible hope of getting a different point of view in the government; secondly, I think one of the most important issues has to do with the general governmental attitude of attempting to make people moral by law, best displayed by prohibition legislation, which is a phase of it. Anything which would show disapproval of the Eighteenth Amendment and the Volstead Act, whether practical results are accomplished or not, seems to me a worthwhile end."

Among those who have selected Hoover is Henry Goddard Leach, editor of The Forum, who wants to "see what an engineer can do in a scientific era as chairman of a nation." Mary Austin says Mr. Hoover "seems to me of all the candidates most in the American presidential tradition (?—?—?)," but adds "I can't help a sneaking feeling that if Smith should be elected, it would be amusing to see what would happen." A somewhat similar view is that of Kenneth Hayes Miller, who intends to vote for Hoover, but says, "I admire Smith, also, and do not think the nation would lose by his election." Dr. Henry S. Coffin, on the other hand, observes, "I have been a Democrat in most of the presidential elections, because I believed in tariff for revenue only, not protection, and in the League of Nations. These are now apparently abandoned. So because of his constructive stand on temperance, on immigration and on efficiency in government, I intend to vote for Herbert Hoover." Dr. David Starr Jordan, indicating his support of Hoover, says, "he is my idea of a progressive, moving by actual accomplishment, not by talk. He has proved himself the greatest idealist of our time, because his idealism involves actual results. . . . It seems to me that most of our liberal writers have walked too long on the streets of New York. They seem to imagine that New York's ways are legitimate 'politics' and that the sole remedy is crying out against individuals headed the wrong way."

Of those who intend to support Norman Thomas, none replying to the New Republic's questionnaire gave the reasons for doing so—perhaps on the ground that these reasons are so obvious as not to need to be set forth in detail.

Washington Notes

BY THE time this piece sees the light of day, the silence in which Mr. Hoover has been enveloped now for nearly a month will have been broken by the delivery of at least one additional profound, philosophical and probably platitudinous discussion of the questions of the campaign—or at least some of them. By that time, too, the colorful Alfred Emanuel will be gaily galloping through the West on his second tour of the country, smart-cracking as he goes, clowning a little here and there, ladling out to the cheering crowds a tasty mixture of earnestness and humor, manufacturing, with the hearty coöperation of four car-loads of press agents and reporters, columns of human-interest stuff, tossing brown derbys right and left. Back in New York Johnny Raskob and his merry men at the General Motors Building, in charge of what the advertising men call the "follow up," will do their part enthusiastically. By that time, I think, things are going to be very hot and very "poisonal" indeed—just as "poisonal" as the Happy Warrior, his campaign aides, orators and publicity experts can make them without risking a reaction.

As political stylists, the two men running against each other for the presidency this time are at opposite poles. Their ideas of campaigning present an amazing contrast, and it will be interesting to see how they work out. It will, at any rate, give the political practitioners and observers data useful in future fights. It may confirm some of the things apparently proved by the 1924 campaign, and it may, on the other hand, compel a partial revision of these. Leaving aside all question of the merits of the men and the relative weight of the issues, if any, there is no more doubt that the Hoover campaign is the most colorless of this generation—not forgetting the one made by his predecessor—than there is that the fight Smith is making

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

is the most thrilling, interesting and vigorous. Most people will concede that. Whether dignity and dullness appeal more strongly to the people in a presidential campaign than a sparkling and sprightly political performance will probably not be clear even after the election. There are too many new prejudices and resentments created by the candidacies of both men to permit of clarity about anything.

As I see it, what the Hoover campaign lacks more than anything else is enthusiasm. This rather essential quality is so conspicuously absent, that the whole business of electing him seems to drag. I do not dispute that Hoover has a great potential strength in the country, that he is particularly strong with the women, that he will probably be elected, but there is none the less an incontestable sagging back of the party leaders everywhere. They want him elected, because their own political fortunes are bound up in the success of the Republican party, but to save their lives they cannot work up any real heat in advocating him. Of the larger men on the Republican side, men above the grade of state leaders, there has certainly been no rush to take the stump for him. Probably there will be an effort to make up for this in the next three weeks, but up to now, if there has been a single "ringing appeal" for Herbert, made in a voice that rang, I cannot recall it. Men like Root, for example, give out calm endorsements of the man, pledge themselves to his support, but are compelled to say they radically differ with him in his stand on the single issue capable of stirring the people in the great cities of the country—to wit, prohibition. Longworth, that "Prince of Good Fellows," a recognized wet, makes a dreadfully dull speech in New York on the importance of the tariff in the campaign. He sounded as if he were reciting the multiplication table and did not know it very well. Coolidge continues cautious and remote, "helping" by letting it be understood from the White House that he will make a speech for Mr. Hoover and then a few days later letting it be understood—again from the White House—that he will not speak. This course, repeated, as it has been, several times, greatly enrages the small group of Belgian Relief workers who are close to the candidate, and deepens the creases in the broad brow of Herbert himself.

Of them all, Borah has done better work in the Hoover cause, this time, than any other man in the party, coming in for his full share of abuse from the wet Smith press in the East. He has been under the handicap of having to explain at various times his own denunciations of Hoover, made on the floor of the Senate and elsewhere; but on the whole, his speeches have been good and there has at least been an air of earnestness and conviction about his advocacy. It has not been listless or perfunctory, and he has not had to squirm in order to justify support of Mr. Hoover on prohibition. On that subject, at least, they see eye to eye. Speaking of Borah calls to mind the old whisper still going around Washington that, in the event of the Hoover election, he will become Secretary of State. Personally, I do not believe it, and for a number of reasons. In the first place, I doubt very much whether Mr. Borah would want that sort of job. Probably it would bore him to death. In the second place, I doubt very much whether, assuming he did want it, Hoover would appoint him. They are so far apart in the angle from which they view foreign affairs that, in my judgment, the selection would be an absurdity. A better guess for Hoover's Secretary of State would be Dwight W. Morrow or Charles Gates Dawes.

And while we are on the subject of the Cabinet, it may be worth while mentioning that the belief, for which there is unquestionably real foundation, is growing here that Mr. Mellon would like to stay as Secretary of the Treasury for four more years, and sees no reason he should not. It is depressing news, but I believe it to be true. It will be particularly depressing, should Hoover win, to the Hon. Ogden Mills, who is in a fix where he cannot even afford to look depressed. Quite the contrary, he has to throw up his hat and cheer the suggestion wildly. After all, it is impossible to blame the old gentleman. Look at the fun he has!

It is interesting to me to see how much the Democrats count upon the support of George Norris of Nebraska. I do not mean to minimize Senator Norris' strength, because he undoubtedly has a following, but the idea that several states hinge upon his attitude is to my mind ridiculous. Nor does it accord with the private view of the better posted political leaders on the Democratic side. It is, however, a fact that the notion is firmly fixed in the minds of the General Motors headquarters managers. They feel that if Norris will come out flatly urging Smith's nomination, it will put Nebraska, Montana, North and South Dakota, Wisconsin and Minnesota into the Democratic column. Accordingly, they hope to arrange a nation-wide radio hook-up for the Norris announcement—which may, for all I know, have come before this is printed. I am, however, reasonably sure that if the states above mentioned go for Smith, it will not be because of the Norris support. He would help in Nebraska, beyond a doubt, but he would make no real difference in any of the others.

Washington. T. R. B.

Northern Lights

Town Hall

REMEMBERED now, through the gloom of Berlin, with its restless aridity and dun-colored pretentiousness, Stockholm seems all stone and crystal. There is something eighteenth-century about many of the streets, or at least formal and discreet; they climb and descend toward the water, islands, rock masses, the river, the channels running in and out. This stretch, glitter and whiteness of water, this suddenness of vista, is everywhere. You see sails passing, white ferry boats, painted barges at the feet of palaces or along the quays.

Stockholm is curiously elegant, well mannered and poetic at the same time, pleasant and clear in its outline, intelligent on its face. You feel that as it has consumed the years, it has cleaned up after itself; you gather that this Swedish civilization has not left any clutter of nonsense, that something like a genius of taste has been with it for a long time.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

This bald freshness, energy and taste comes to a head in the famous town hall of Stockholm. This building has been, as everybody knows, one of the most talked-about in the modern world, one of the half-dozen perhaps most noised and published. Everyone knows its picture. A tall, wide place, of two great courts, a square tower with a bronze cupola, gilt-capped, an arcade at the back along the water, all of red brick, rich and dark against the streets and rises of the town, high and rich above the water, the barges, the river boats below.

The Stockholm town hall is based wholly on traditional forms, mostly Italian, but treated nearly always with individual security and invention. The corridors, courts and great chambers are beautiful adventures. As pure mass and space they thrill and excite you as you come into them. One room after another is a fine room taken as such, one room after another suits the use it was intended for. The Swedish color sense is distinct and at the same time beautiful; the craftsmanship employed is admirable. And every phase and moment of the whole building inside and out is done *con amore,* always something thought of to add delight, curiosity, and loveliness. Step by step in and around the town hall you encounter this thought and this loving diversity of pains. If you have little knowledge of Venice, Ravenna, Granada and other architectural memories, you must be astounded at the many motivations and devices to be discovered; if you know something of architectural sources, you must delight in their new employment and recreation.

It is from this enthusiasm and *con amore,* so perpetually employed in the town hall, that its one shortcoming arises. A good deal of the motivation, a good deal of the variety, at bottom borrowings, consists of things that are not enough restated, not seen through far enough, to give them any fresh importance or necessary place in the buildings. What I mean is that those countless devices, a statue here, a bracket or fresco there, or—to take a larger fraction of the whole—the loggia with its recumbent figure of iron grill at the foot of the tower, are not good enough in themselves, not far enough from the things that suggested them, not genuine enough in their relationship to the building, and not profound enough in their execution, to be worthy of serious consideration. That tomb motif, for example, remains a mere rougher form of the Italian original, the grill merely borrows the Scaligeri pattern from Verona; the whole affair drops to the merely picturesque.

You can easily see what happened. In their enthusiasm to make every moment lovely and endearing, the builders tried to apply as many as possible of the things that time has brought about in an older world of art. But in this older world these separate elements arose for very good reasons, and each one was done the best its maker knew. Putting sham Gothic figures, touched up like stage properties, high on a wall, or sticking a bust here or a vase there, or a lamp or semi-shrine, and so on and so on, is not enough in itself, and may drop all too quickly to the level of mere decoration—in America of what base fame already and what glib effects!

It is necessary to dwell on this point in order to get straight this one weakness about the town hall, by which too often it runs the risk of a quality somewhat feminine in art, or at least of being suave, pretty and persuasive where more direct forms are needed or the architecture needs to be left to speak for itself. Through this, now and again, the town hall sinks to mere trivial design and even at times to what I found an embarrassing studio superficiality. But these moments are almost forgotten compared to the magnificent pleasures of the place.

The Stockholm town hall was one-third paid for by private contribution—out of sheer enthusiasm. Crowds pour through it daily, full of pride. The limitations of it and the marvels derive from this same enthusiasm. Such a head-on of steam is what, as much as anything else, delights you and fills you with high Swedish hopes.

Kunst Comedy

Through the town hall, though it was finished ten years ago, instances of the new *kunst* that struck New York so hard last season are frequently in evidence, in furniture, light fixtures, fabrics, and treatments of wood and stone—bold, beautiful, fresh things. Scattered over Stockholm there are rooms, hotels, shops, theaters, where *kunst* has been more or less applied. Much of it is remarkable, a great rest and change, a new delight in color, design and material.

But there is one point about this *kunst* that makes you smile. You have heard among its evangels at home in New York a great cry about its practicability in modern life. It is practical, they have preached, in the matter of getting it done, practical in its usability. As a matter of fact, though there are many short-cuts and simplifications in form, much of this Swedish craft exhibits craftsmanship such as we could scarcely hope to find in America, certainly not very commonly. And some of its surfaces, colors, materials are as delicate and fragile as you ever saw—not the Pompadour herself could have owned more perishable stuff or—at times—more lovely.

Stark Young.

A Great Magician

THE true story of Houdini's death is told apparently for the first time in a new biography ("Houdini, His Life Story," by Harold Kellock from the recollections and documents of Beatrice Houdini: Harcourt, Brace and Company). He had broken his ankle in Albany, while performing his Chinese Water Torture trick, in which he was suspended by the feet in a small cabinet full of water. He had been overworking, even more than was usual with him, and had not been to bed for three nights; he had also been very much worried about Mrs. Houdini, who was ill in Providence. When he arrived in Montreal, his ankle was still so sore that he was obliged to spend most of the time lying on a couch. In this condition, in his dressing-room, he received two students from McGill University, where he had just delivered a lecture on spiritualism. One of the students asked whether it were true "that Houdini could withstand heavy blows without inconvenience. The magician replied that he could do so if he had warning to brace himself. He then picked

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

up some letters. The student said something about testing Houdini's ability then and there. Houdini, absorbed in a letter, was not paying attention and gave an absent-minded reply, which the boy interpreted as consent. The next instant, Houdini was startled by receiving a series of sharp blows in the abdomen. At the fourth blow, he stopped the young man with a gesture, just as the two other students jumped up in protest. Acute peritonitis developed, and, after a Herculean struggle, he died in the hospital."

There is about this sudden ending to a career which had its heroic aspect something tragically ironic. It shocks us to hear that Houdini, scarcely over fifty, and at the most interesting point of his career, should thus have fallen a victim to one of the most trivial of his own challenges, to a blow given by a college student, and given under a misapprehension, while he was ill and reading his mail.

Houdini was the son of a rabbi. His parents had come from Budapest, and settled in Appleton, Wisconsin. The father knew no English and they were poor: Houdini (whose real name was Ehrich Weiss) went off to earn his own living at the age of eleven. He had already learned to do tricks from circus side-shows, and by working in a locksmith's shop, had found out how to pick locks: he could already, in fact, open handcuffs. He had from the beginning the magician's vocation. He was by turns messenger boy, necktie cutter and Wild Man in a side-show; but his concentration on magic was as unremitting and intense as Lindbergh's on flying.

Houdini had, thus, in his field, the all-absorbing preoccupation of genius, but he was remarkable also for other qualities, the virtues of the sober, pious and self-respecting German-Jewish family from which he came, virtues which he managed to preserve through all the hardships and undignified pursuits of his early life. Houdini remained all his life, and in spite of considerable egotism, the scrupulous, loyal, generous and industrious son of his parents. It was partly this background of family life—his devotion to his mother and his wife are among the most striking facts of his career—which gave him his peculiar strength and dignity. When, at Bradford, in Yorkshire, a former hangman who had retired from his profession to run a public-house and had set up as a phrenologist, attempted to bribe Houdini, offering to bet large sums of money on his ability to tie the latter up so that it would be impossible for him to escape and then, when Houdini had "thrown" the contest, to divide the winnings with him, Houdini wrote contemptuously in his diary: "Guess he didn't know how I was brought up."

Houdini's spirit was also romantic, in an essentially Germanic fashion. The story of his marriage is amazing. Mrs. Houdini was eighteen when he met her: she had been taken by her mother to a performance which he was giving at the high school, and in the course of a trick, the magician upset acid on her dress. He immediately leapt down from the platform and apologized fervently: the mother was indignant. "I managed to whisper to him," Mrs. Houdini writes, "'Don't mind Mother. I think you're wonderful.' 'Do you?' he exclaimed, straightening up, and for a long moment our eyes held, while mother and the rest of the audience were completely forgotten." He brought her a new dress at her house, and though the mother refused to let him come in, she slipped out and joined him in the street. He persuaded her to go to Coney Island with him, and made her marry him then and there. The quality of his imagination was distinctly Gothic. Mrs. Houdini tells the following incident: "The last night the brothers worked together at the dance hall in Coney Island, I had a bad scare. Houdini asked his brother and me to take a walk with him after the evening's work was over. He led us into the country on a dark, lonely bridge spanning some swiftly running black water. It was a weird-looking night, with a split moon that seemed to be dodging in and out behind heavy clouds. In the middle of the bridge he halted us, and there we waited for a time silently, I at least in growing trepidation. Finally a distant bell tolled solemnly twelve times. As soon as the last beat ceased to reverberate, Houdini clasped his brother's hand and mine together, raised them aloft and cried: 'Beatrice, Dash, raise your hands to heaven and swear you will both be true to me. Never betray me in any way, so help you God!'" And even in Houdini's later years, when he wanted to attend a spiritualistic *séance* incognito, he was in the habit of disguising himself in a fantastic make-up of which the elaborateness was entirely unnecessary, but which involved a long white beard and a hump. He loved to snatch off the beard dramatically and declare to the discomfited medium, "I am Houdini!"

But it was simply that he saw himself naturally as a romantic figure. He lived his own drama and had otherwise little of the actor about him—so little, that when one reads this biography, one has the feeling that, in his role of public entertainer, he was always a little out of his orbit. He was, at the beginning, it appears, so poor a showman that, even at a time when he was already able to perform feats which were unprecedented and unique, he was at first unable to attract attention to them. And in the last years of his life, as one saw him at the Hippodrome, his whole magician's patter was confined to a few quaint perfunctory phrases such as, "Will wonders never cease!" He was really a serious man, and seemed not even tinged by that charlatanry, innocent as such charlatanry may be, which has perhaps always hitherto been inseparable from his profession.

Having mastered modern conjuring in all its branches, which were far from satisfying so ambitious, energetic and adventurous a man, he began to specialize in escapes, which were really dangerous and difficult. Now, aside from the special interest which attaches to Houdini's personality, there is nothing particularly important or interesting about escapes. By the time Houdini was at the height of his career, he had acquired a knowledge of locks which was probably unrivalled in the world, but it was a kind of knowledge perfectly useless even to a locksmith. Yet the tale of Houdini's adventures is an exciting and somehow an impressive one. No challenge is too formidable for him; no problem too opaque. He seems eaten by a veritable passion to test himself more and more severely: he must prove that he is invincible. Here, as I say, if we forget Houdini, the object is ridiculous, yet the story which culminates in his breaking out of a steel "carette" which the Russian police had devised to transport prisoners to Siberia

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

—a feat which seems to have made Houdini a popular hero in Russia—the tale of Houdini's escapes excites us like the story of any brave man who pits himself against obstacles and bests them.

But his supremacy as Handcuff King was far from satisfying Houdini. He had also, during all this period, been occupied with researches of a character almost scholarly: he had been collecting and reading books on magic with tireless voracity, and had gone to the greatest trouble to interview retired magicians and investigate all kinds of wonder-workers. He began himself to write on the subject. And in his last years, he gave up escapes almost entirely and appeared to the public for the first time in something like his true character and at something like his full stature. He had been making of spiritualism and mediums the same kind of exhaustive study which he had made of prisons and locks. And he now challenged any medium to show him supernatural phenomena which he could not expose and reproduce. To the demonstrations and lectures of this period, he brought perhaps even a more fervent enthusiasm than he had to his earlier escapes: the exposure of mediums had a certain moral and intellectual interest, and Houdini's war upon them became a veritable crusade. It may be that his famous encounter with the medium called Margery in Boston, who, if it had not been for his exposure of her, might perhaps have received the prize offered by the Scientific American for genuine spiritualistic phenomena, will make a landmark in psychic investigation.

In the years before his death, he had come to occupy a unique position as an authority. He certainly knew more about trickery than anyone else in the world. He had studied professional miracle-working as no one had ever done before. And he now appeared in his true role, which was not precisely that of an entertainer, but of an expert on magic, equipped for his peculiar field with more intelligence, experience and learning than had perhaps ever before been brought to it. At this period, he seemed to take more pleasure in explaining how tricks were done than in astonishing people with them. And the library which he had been collecting became one of his main preoccupations: it had reached such enormous proportions that he was obliged to hire a librarian to catalogue and take care of it.

One cannot but regret that Houdini's crusade against spiritualism should so soon have been cut short. Yet it may be that, at the time of his death, Houdini had reached the limits of his capacity and exhausted the possibilities of his field. There is, as I have said, a curious kind of pathos in a man of Houdini's abilities having died as a consequence of accidents which had occurred in the course of performing ridiculous tricks. Yet he had really, one supposes, burnt himself out. And the scientific study of trickery, with all the implications of its findings for religion and other fields, must be left to be pursued by others from a different point of view.

When that day comes, they will find that Houdini has supplied them with valuable information and a sound set of principles. And, in the meantime, we may find in the story of his life an interest we should hardly have expected. The history of Houdini's career somehow makes us think better of humanity than the lives of many other figures of more conventional reputations in more exalted fields. It is thrilling, even in a juggler or a trapeze performer, to see some human faculty carried to its furthest point, to a point where its feats seem incredible. And Houdini had much more than this to commend him to our admiration: he was a brave and independent man, of rare integrity. To read the story of his career, even among the dime museums and the East Side cabarets, is to be moved as we are always moved by the struggle of a superior man to emerge from the commonplaces, the ignominies and the hardships of the common life, to make a livelihood and place among his fellows at the same time that he must perfect himself in his chosen work.

EDMUND WILSON.

CORRESPONDENCE

Progressives and Al Smith

SIR: For nearly two years I have been an interested reader of the New Republic. Rarely have I found myself disagreeing; but in the matter of progressive support for Governor Smith's candidacy I must differ. Twice the Democratic candidate has received my vote, and never have I voted for a Republican President, largely because the unprogressive character of the party repelled me.

By his definite espousal of the wet cause, Mr. Smith alienated many middle-class Americans. If progressives are to achieve their aims, this class must be won. It is true that such Americans too often neglect to vote, probably because they do not sense a real issue. When they do feel that a matter of importance is at stake, they will turn out without much fuss or fury and they then decide the election.

Ignoring the present probability that Governor Smith will be defeated, what prospect is there that he could forward the interests progressives have at heart? I do not question his personal interest or good intentions. But it is manifest that his heaviest obligations are to Tammany and his plainest commitments to the wets. Mr. Raskob and Tammany will hold the prior mortgages. Assuming that he makes an honest effort to enforce the law and seeks modification only through Congress, he will be the leader of a party which openly announces its hostility to his prohibition program. No interpretation of the Missouri and Ohio primaries—as well as the statements of many, like Walsh of Montana and Daniels of North Carolina—permits any other view. It would mean four years of wrangling without getting anywhere, with the prohibition question blocking pretty much everything.

I cannot ignore the reactionary character of Mr. Smith's proposed solution of the liquor problem. He would go back to the forty-eight varieties of state control. Now, how would it be possible for him to plead effectively for such a course and at the same time plead for any plan of federal control of electricity or any other public utility? In the one case he would be steering a course east-northwest; in the other, south-southwest.

Progressives should also note the incidental help to their cause which the second paragraph of the Eighteenth Amendment provides. The hostility between state and federal governments was an inheritance from colonial days which marred much of our history. For the first time, a part of the Constitution explicitly provides what was really implicit in the whole fabric. In stage-coach days, many things were purely local which now become of state and even national concern. It is just this development that makes coöperation between the two instruments of government so much more needful today. It should be clear to all forward-looking persons that the "twilight zone" where state and federal authority can be made to appear in conflict is the refuge of every form of social evil against which they contend. It is a disservice to the progressive cause for Governor Smith to seek to revive that hostility and to set state and federal powers in opposition. . . .

H. B. MANSELL.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

SIR: Your latest editorial supporting the contention that progressives should vote for Smith is, I believe, untimely, unreasonable and self-contradictory. You admit that the party which will be behind him in Congress is in no wise sufficiently liberal to back a progressive program. You admit, or should admit, that the Republican policies to which Smith has expressed opposition have in general been opposed and favored by both Republicans and Democrats. Both parties favored tax reduction. The agreement to supervise Nicaragua's election, the moral aid to Mexico, and the policy of military protection of the foreign investments of our citizens were upheld by members of both, and in general by the educated classes throughout the country. In fact, I have never heard a satisfactory vindication of the liberal viewpoint in regard to America's responsibilities toward her southern neighbors. Smith's prohibition progam you admit can have no political reality. . . . The next Senate will without any reasonable question, according to most unbiased and informed political writers, be Republican. Republican Senates after the Civil and World Wars, when partisan passions were as high as they will be if Smith should be elected, completely obstructed the leadership of Democratic Presidents. From these facts it must be conceded that, as far as getting a liberal reform in the present order of things by legislative means is concerned, a vote for Smith is just as worthless as a vote for Varney or Thomas.

Your editorial is untimely because you have overlooked a significant recent action on Hoover's part, his order to put the Republican campaign fund down to at least three millions of dollars. This shows, I believe, that he can eventually desert the Republican dogmas which protect the present plutocracy, and become an articulate liberal to the extent that the plutocracy will have decreased its contributions to his campaign fund. Since Mark Hanna it has been the policy of big business to contribute to Republican campaigns in proportion as the party leader promises them favorable legislative policies. . . .

Furthermore, as President he could use his scientific methods in government for the social welfare, because he will have a Republican Congress backing him. His party will realize that it must carry out certain progressive reforms or else surrender the government to the Democrats. . . . The reforms Hoover could then carry out would be: a scientific tariff, a comparative test of government and privately owned power plants, a farm solution which he will sincerely advocate in its entirety, smaller navy and disarmament along with the other signers of the Kellogg treaty who could not agree at the Geneva Conference, a searching investigation of the prohibition situation, either to find ways of more efficient enforcement of the present law or to recommend a new constitutional plan which will not in effect nullify the Eighteenth Amendment, but will be liberal enough to promote real temperance and be readily enforcible, and finally, the organization of a cabinet department of insular possessions to abolish entirely "khaki rule" and incontinuity of governors' policies in the Philippines. . . .

QUINTIN M. SANGER.

Worcester, Mass.

One Vote against Bigotry

SIR: In spite of Democratic family tradition and Wilsonian hero-worship, up to now I have declared firmly that Hoover should have my vote, because I believe, perhaps erroneously, that Hoover has had the experience and has the will necessary to put these United States in a less despicable position among the nations of the world.

But I can't do it. I have just returned from the heart of Virginia, where people, who believe they are intelligent, are more afraid of the "Pope in Washington" than they are of a "nigger" in any office. Anyone who has lived south of Washington knows the dire power of that fear.

So "Al" has my vote, to be cast in a doubtful Republican district up-state, entirely because he is a Catholic and because there are bigots extant, who would defeat him, *therefore.*

May the many liberal voters of the towns who do not believe there is a "whispering campaign" take heed and visit the rural districts of both North and South, to the end that America may keep her priceless heritage as a land free from religious persecution.

I. C. H.

New Paltz, N. Y.

Why I Am For Hoover

SIR: I am an independent in politics; I never have belonged, nor expect to belong, to the Republican party. For many years, however, I have regarded Herbert Hoover as the one man most fitted to be President of the United States. The government of this country is carried on by a great army of people whose efficiency and honesty vary within wide limits. The President cannot and should not personally control this vast organization. Yet his influence is necessarily great, and if he stands for the things we believe in, that very fact helps us all, and would help us if he had no more power than the English king. What do I understand Hoover to stand for?

First of all, as will be said of any candidate, for the well-being of all the people, and for orderly progress toward better things. How is that well-being, and how is that progress, to be attained? Broadly speaking, through science and good will. Good intentions alone have often led to disaster; we must know what is wise in order to act wisely. Now, Hoover's record is an open book for all to read. No other man of our generation, I think it may be said, has shown so much skill in the administration of difficult affairs. He has never regarded his problems as a politician or diplomatist, but always as an engineer, a scientific man. He has always asked what can be done under these conditions, and what results may be expected from this or that policy. Anyone may ask such questions, but he has shown extraordinary skill in finding the right answers, in making arrangements which have resulted in the greatest good to the greatest number. He knows the world he lives in, and the people of the world, as few men do. He may for this very reason be free from certain attractive illusions, but he has never hesitated to attempt difficult things. He represents, it seems to me, exactly that type of intelligence without which our great and complicated civilization must fall to pieces. . . .

I have heard it suggested that Hoover might be wise enough, but is not a natural leader of men. There is some advantage in a President who does not talk too much, who acts rather than talks. But Hoover has in all his undertakings been able to command the loyalty of great groups of men, men of all kinds and of all opinions. They have not shouted for him so much as worked for him; willingly, patiently, and with enthusiasm. I think we can see in Hoover a competent leader of the competent, a man who will be followed by those whose following is worth while.

Now, as to the matter of drink, Hoover proposes to go forward, not backward. A great deal of the current talk about prohibition is based on ignorance or prejudice. It is a fact that our life today is vastly better than it was in the old times which I remember. A few years ago I reached New York from South America early on the morning of Labor Day. All day long I had business which took me from the Battery to the Bronx, and I reached my hotel on Forty-second Street at 11:30 P. M. I did not see one person recognizably under the influence of liquor. I have been in San Francisco on the Fourth of July, and my experience has been the same. Young people have grown up without ever seeing a drunken man. When people tell me that this place or that is as wet as the Atlantic, I wonder where they have been. It is possible to find booze, as it is possible to find prostitutes in all our cities. Perhaps these evils cannot be entirely eliminated; certainly they cannot in the present state of national morality. The evils are very great, and since the War cynical disregard for the decencies of life has permeated our population, perhaps especially affecting those who ought to be leaders of thought. Are we to abandon the effort for decent orderly life, through which alone the dreams of rational radicalism may be made to come true? I think not, but with Hoover today, and those succeeding him, we may go forward to a future better than we now dare to imagine.

T. D. A. COCKERELL.

University of Colorado, Boulder, Col.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Legend of Charles Dickens

The Life of Charles Dickens, by John Forster. New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company. Edited and Annotated with an Introduction by J. W. T. Ley. 893 pages. $5.

Charles Dickens, A Biography from New Sources, by Ralph Straus. New York: Cosmopolitan Book Corporation. 340 pages. $4.

This Side Idolatry, by C. E. Bechhofer-Roberts. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company. $2.50.

CHARLES DICKENS was the greatest master of fiction who ever lived, in that he made fiction not his art merely but his career and his life. He lived a greater story than any that he wrote. He early conceived himself as a hero, and he made the dream come true. As a child in the house at Chatham which his father had taken in a period of prosperity, he found a library of old books, "Don Quixote," "The Arabian Nights," Defoe, Smollett, Fielding, and read himself into the heroic parts. The tragedy of the dark years which followed, when he was pasting labels in Warren's blacking warehouse, was the sense of frustration, of defeat, the horrible dread that all his dreams might come to nothing. This gives the note of self-pity which runs through the autobiographical fragment which he turned over to Forster. But Dickens did not languish in the castle of Despair. He fought for success with the giant, who took the form of shorthand—the very metaphor which he uses in "David Copperfield." The dark period of his life became the necessary opening for his saga. As this progressed, he drew into it his experience and his friends; but for his heroic role he needed an accomplice, and only one would serve—the public. The stage offered the immediate approach to this partnership, and Dickens tried hard to become an actor. Although he was balked of this ambition by a sore throat on the day appointed for his try-out at Covent Garden, he never lost his hankering for the footlights, and was forever practising as playwright, actor and manager. Meanwhile, journalism was a practicable means to his end, and as reporter he gained an extraordinary mass of human material, and learned the art of presenting it. The "Sketches by Boz" carried him over from journalism to literature, and, the transition barely accomplished, there came the extraordinary series of accidents which first brought him the subordinate job of providing the letter press for the plates of "Pickwick," and, by the suicide of the illustrator, put him in complete control of the enterprise. The happy creation of Sam Weller made him at a bound a best-seller, and while he was completing the book, he began "Oliver Twist" and "Nicholas Nickleby," which consolidated his position as the most popular writer for English-speaking folk. It is not surprising that Dickens should have based his theory of fiction on the romantic elements in daily life.

But Dickens saw himself as more than an entertainer. He was the redresser of wrongs, the champion of the weak, the innocent and the oppressed, the exposer of pretentious humbug. It was a great part to play in the England of Wilberforce, Shaftesbury and Carlyle, and Dickens played it greatly. His own wretchedness as a child, exaggerated in his mind as the demands of his great life-fiction grew upon him, had given him a genuine sympathy with suffering, especially of children. The misfortunes of his own friends, and even of those whom he chose to think his enemies, were a constant preoccupation with him, and he was unremitting in his efforts to help. He always had some public cause, for which he was forming a committee, or writing a prospectus. He fancied himself for a month in the role of editor of a great newspaper, "devoted to the advocacy of all rational and honest means by which wrong might be redressed, just rights maintained, and the happiness and welfare of society promoted"—and he sat for that period at the editorial desk of The Daily News. He was a public character; but a more intimate contact with his audience was necessary, and accordingly there came the readings from his own works, first for charity, then as a profession. His friends feared that this would prove a derogation from his position as chief novelist, but Dickens had sounder judgment. The public adored its part in the Dickens drama. It literally fell into his arms. No man of letters ever achieved such a triumph as this. Other writers have made fortunes, have been crowned by academies, or admitted to the peerage, but none has ever had the experience of great gatherings, not once but hundreds of times, in scores of cities, testifying by roaring seas of applause to their appreciation of his art. It is the fitting end of the saga that Dickens should have given his life in responding to the enthusiasm which he had created.

The influence of the drama on Dickens' art has often been noted. He played the parts of his characters as he wrote them, as he later enjoyed interpreting them to his public. He was not only a master of word and gesture, of mimicry and pantomime. He was incomparable in use of make-up, costume, properties and stage direction. Mrs. Gamp dozing before the fire with a policeman's coat about her "as if she were being embraced by one of the old watch" is a perfect stage picture, and Dickens never forgot to hand out her umbrella when she stirred abroad. It is not to be forgotten that as preparation for the great scene of Carton's sacrifice in "The Tale of Two Cities," Dickens had himself acted the similar part of Richard Wardour in Wilkie Collins' play, "The Frozen Deep."

And Dickens dramatized his life. He was his own stage manager, but he had an able assistant in Forster. He was surrounded by a supporting company—Forster, Ainsworth, Mark Lemon, Wilkie Collins, Hablôt Brown. He needed enemies, and he found them in his publishers. Undoubtedly the early quarrels originated in his feeling that these gentlemen were making too much money out of his success—he may have recalled Byron's remark that Barabbas was a publisher—but he certainly forced them into roles of complicated villainy, made them play Fagin and Sikes to his Oliver. His quarrel with Thackeray was half drama—what a grand situation in the two great masters of English fiction passing by as mortal enemies!

Throughout his career he needed a leading lady. Maria Beadnell, who was first cast for the part, flouted him. When she wrote to him years later, Dickens' answers showed how he welcomed the prospect of introducing into his life drama an act of constancy in love, which should be characterized by perfect innocence. His disillusionment when he saw his heroine, fat and forty, was a blow; but he promptly turned the occurrence into farce, reducing Dora Spenlow, the child wife in "David Copperfield," to Flora Finching, in "Little Dorrit." His sister-in-law, Mary Hogarth, who died in his arms two years after his marriage, was certainly the great love of his heart, a love which he shared with the public in Little Nell. The increasing inadequacy of his wife to play opposite him in either the big scenes of his triumph or the more intimate moments of his domestic drama, was the real cause of the separation, which

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Dickens dramatized for the public in statements which disrupted his supporting company and made Forster cringe with shame. Dickens dressed himself for his part, with the broad stocks, wide shirt fronts, and flashy waistcoats which intrigued America. He made up with long hair, and flowing moustaches, in which he took great delight, afterwards merged in the semi-patriarchal beard. We are indebted to Mr. Straus for a print from the Tailor and Cutter of 1870, which shows Dickens and Disraeli as models on the same plate. Assuredly the illustrator had a sound sense of the fitness of things in bringing together the two great acting publicists of the age.

His pranks, such as ringing a doorbell and lying down on the doorstep, remind one of Swift's, except for the lack of irony. The best of them was his pretense of falling in love with the youthful Victoria, for the communication of which he chose exactly the right confidant in the serious Landor. The readiness with which Dickens took his cues as well as his sense of his position as a national figure find a perfect illustration in the account which he wrote of the railway accident at Staplehurst. To the guards who were "running up and down quite wildly" he said, " 'Look at me. Do stop an instant and look at me, and tell me whether you don't know me.' One of them answered: 'We know you very well, Mr. Dickens.' "

It was to be expected that legend should gather about a character who attracted so fully the attention of the public. Others were eager to appropriate a share of what we call today the publicity. Dickensian scholarship is concerned with testing not only the authorized legend created by the subject himself, but the apocryphal accretions thereto. There are the "Sketches by Boz," to which it is tempting to lend a personal interpretation. There are the myths created by journalists such as N. P. Willis. There is the story set afloat by Miss Davenport that Dickens was actually on the professional stage, as a member of her father's company, and took revenge for his dismissal in his picture of the Crummles in "Nicholas Nickleby." There are the anecdotes of Dickens' wild behavior, which led to rumors of his insanity, given forth by Miss Christian and preserved by R. H. Stoddard in his "Anecdote Biographies of Thackeray and Dickens." Apart from the interest of these myths to the severe student of Dickens, it must be admitted they lend a certain richness to the saga, much as the apocryphal gospels contribute atmosphere to the canonical story.

All the elements of the Dickens legend are duly represented in the three books whose titles stand at the head of this article. Forster was, as I have said, Dickens' official stage manager and producer. He was inevitably the official biographer. His "Life" is, of course, one of the best known biographies in English literature. Forster stood to his subject less in the relation of a Boswell than of Lockhart to Scott, or Froude to Carlyle. His first-hand documents were largely Dickens' letters to himself, letters often written, one must feel, as part of the self-dramatization on which Dickens was always, consciously or subconsciously, engaged. Writing in the spirit of the legend, and with the eyes of the Dickens family upon him, Forster was obliged to extenuate and suppress. He passes lightly over both the Maria Beadnell episode and the separation of Dickens and his wife. He slurs over the five-year quarrel with Thackeray with the plenary indulgence: "Neither was wholly right, nor was either altogether in the wrong." He gives a very partial account of Dickens' relations to his publishers. These misjudgments and omissions Mr. J. W. T. Ley, one of the foremost of Dickens scholars and author of "The Dickens Circle," has conscientiously revised and supplied in some 600 notes which add no little bulk to an original by no means slight.

Mr. Ley's work of restored biography has been admirably done, the only fault being the mechanical one of failure to give page references to the numbered notes. Mr. Straus' biography is a vivacious, entertaining narrative. His "new sources" are, I think, all to be found in Mr. Ley's notes, with the exception of a conjecture that Dickens' oldest son got his name of Charles Culliford from a gentleman who had married a sister of the novelist's mother. He makes considerable use of Dickens mythology, but his biography is, on the whole, a sound interpretation of Dickens' career, with some penetrating observations. Mr. Bechhofer-Roberts' "This Side Idolatry" is a good deal this side. His process of turning Dickens' life into fiction consists in supplementing canon and apocrypha with invented scenes, making Dickens' father talk exaggeratedly like Micawber, his mother like Mrs. Nickleby, Miss Beadnell like Flora Finching and Dickens himself like the Wellers. It is Dickens' nemesis that his own method of caricature should be turned against him—but nemesis loses its force when its weapon is a book which from any point of view is vulgar, silly and dull.

ROBERT MORSS LOVETT.

Mr. Hughes on the Supreme Court

The Supreme Court of the United States: Its Foundation, Methods and Achievements: An Interpretation, by Charles Evans Hughes. New York: Columbia University Press. 269 pages. $2.50.

THIS little volume of lectures delivered by Mr. Hughes at Columbia University last year has the distinction of being the first systematic attempt by one who has been a member of that body to picture and explain the work of the Supreme Court of the United States. Story and Miller wrote treatises on constitutional law; other justices have given us occasional or fragmentary comments on the Court; but it has remained for Mr. Hughes to write a well balanced, though brief, book on the subject. The significance which this fact gives the volume is naturally increased by the eminence of the author as well as by the circumstance that after a lapse of a dozen years he can view with real detachment the tribunal upon which he sat for six years as an associate justice.

Detachment, in fact, is the keynote of the book. It is written with austere restraint. It is in no sense an "inside" or confidential story. It contains no gossip, few personal anecdotes, little, in short, to indicate the intimacy of the author's acquaintance with his subject. In commenting upon the method by which the Court handles cases in conference, Mr. Hughes is careful to explain that "In referring to this, I am not revealing confidences which I gained during my term of office." We have, in short, exactly the proper and decorous account of the Supreme Court which we ought to expect from Mr. Hughes, who is obviously one of the last men who could bring himself to tell tales out of school.

In his opening chapter Mr. Hughes explains the historical origins of the Court and the principles which, he says, govern its exercise of judicial power. According to the fourth and last of these, the Court does not use its power to review legislative policy or to invalidate laws because they are deemed unwise. Here Mr. Hughes frankly ad-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

mits that "when the Court is dealing with the question whether a legislative act is arbitrary, and transcends the limits of reason which are deemed to be embraced in the fundamental conception of due process of law or of equal protection of the laws, it may be difficult to draw the line between what is regarded as wholly unreasonable and what is deemed to be unwise." He assures us, however, that "the distinction nevertheless exists and it is ever present to the conscientious judge."

The most interesting chapter is that dealing with the Court at work. Here is emphasized the steady independence of political or partisan pressure which the Court has shown. The Dred Scott Case, the Legal Tender Cases and the Income Tax Cases are mentioned as virtually the only instances in which the Court has been clearly open to criticism in its handling of cases. These Mr. Hughes refers to as "self-inflicted wounds." Some indication is given of the actual methods by which the Court does its work, and stress is placed upon the influence which the character and intellectual ability of individual members of the Court have upon its methods and accomplishments, as well as the opportunity which is open for individual distinction. It is in this connection that Mr. Hughes drily remarks that "it is safe to say that no member of the Supreme Court is under any illusion as to the mental equipment of his brethren." He believes that dissenting opinions are of real value, as evidenced by the numerous instances in which they have become law.

In his third lecture, "Cementing the Union," Mr. Hughes defends in a thoroughly conventional manner the theory and practice of judicial review, declaring that "instead of the exercise of this authority being a judicial usurpation, the failure to exercise it would have been an unworthy abdication." The rest of the lecture, as well as the following one on "The States and the Nation," is a rapid-fire survey of leading constitutional decisions similar to that in any sound commentary on the Constitution. The last two lectures on "Liberty, Property and Social Justice" are perhaps less illuminating than some of the others, probably because the title sounds so inviting. They comprise a matter-of-fact review, again along strictly conventional lines, of the judicial construction of the various clauses of the Bill of Rights and the Fourteenth Amendment. Leading cases are lucidly discussed with the aid of liberal quotations from judicial opinions. Mr. Hughes does not venture criticisms of any of these cases. His only comment on the notorious Lochner Case invalidating the New York ten-hour law for bakers is to call attention to the fact that Justice Harlan, who dissented vigorously in that case, wrote the majority opinion in the Adair Case in which the federal anti-coercion act was declared void, another admittedly reactionary opinion. In the same way Justice Sutherland's opinion in the Minimum Wage Case is matched by his liberal opinion in the recent zoning law case of Euclid vs. Ambler Realty Company. Mr. Hughes seems content to impress upon his readers that the Court is a human institution, that its views on constitutional questions frequently vary with the change of time and personnel, that the liberal decisions of today would have been impossible twenty years ago, that individual justices will stand out as conservatives in one case and liberals in another, that, in short, in view of the wide range of discretion implicit in the exercise of judicial review, the results as a rule are about what anyone familiar with human psychology would expect them to be. Perhaps, after all, the net impression of the Court and its task thus created is more accurate than that made by a more ambitious philosophical analysis.

On one point, Mr. Hughes has definite opinions, and expresses them. There is nothing to be gained by tampering with the Supreme Court as to either the range of its authority or its technique for the exercise of that authority. While five-to-four decisions may be unfortunate, they are better than decisions by a minority of the Court, as Mr. Hughes refers to Senator Borah's proposal that acts of Congress should not be held void unless seven justices concur. Criticism of the Court has in the main dealt with "what is occasional rather than typical," and to those who attack the Court or its work the challenge is flung: "Is there any better plan, whatever imperfections our present one may have, for securing a reasonably continuous, non-partisan and philosophical exposition of the Constitution than by regarding it as the supreme law of the land to be applied in actual cases and controversies through the exercise of judicial power?" ROBERT E. CUSHMAN.

The Newest Testament

Dostoevsky: The Man and His Work, by Julius Meier-Graefe, translated by Herbert H. Marks. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. 406 pages. $6.

READING this book is like walking at night on a country road by the vague light of the moon. Only rarely do the wayside grass and boulders stand out clearly. One treads upon shadows. The words, taken separately, are plain enough. But in combination they wear a distressing obscurity, and read as though they belonged to a foreign language with which one is imperfectly acquainted. The author places us at a double disadvantage: he writes loosely, as though he were engaging an intimate in conversation on a subject near to the hearts of both; he writes ponderously, with the false profundity, the involutions, the flatulence of the immortal Professor Teufelsdröckh. One is swept up from the café table to some realm of high abstractions where the air is too rarefied to breathe. His dialectics are of so gossamer a quality that in trying to deal with them one feels as if one were grappling with a ghost. In fairness to the author, however, it must be said that some of the obscurity of the text is to be laid at the door of his translator. While I have not compared the English version with the original page for page, I have done enough collating to convince me that the translator has done a wretched job. One can understand some of his omissions as an act of despair, but the injudicious cutting of details, the numerous false renderings, and the emasculation of some of the author's striking metaphors, merely point to incompetence. In fine, any restatement of Meier-Graefe's ideas which may be found below is set down with the tacit reservation: "if that's what he means."

From what has been said, the reader will readily gather that this book is not an example of the art of biography as currently practised: it does not set before us Dostoyevsky in the flesh against the living background of his world. Certainly, it does not read like a novel. Only one chapter out of fifteen is concerned with the elements of Dostoyevsky's life, and that only in their bearing on his work. The volume, properly speaking, is a literary study, and in no sense that biography which our time demands, and for which raw material, necessarily in Dostoyevsky's own tongue, is accumulating rapidly. Meier-Graefe's contribution takes its place beside John Middleton Murry's critique of the Russian master.

Both these strangers come to him with admiration that

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

touches on reverence. Of the two, the German appears to be the more violently enthusiastic. "If it's a matter of psychology," he exclaims, "one could say that one single book of Dostoevsky's stands higher than the whole of European novel-literature since Diderot. Why a book? A chapter, a few lines suffice." "A Raw Youth" is "the only novel of our times that has any significance for fathers and sons." His work is not literature *(Dichtung)*: "we accept it as once the exile accepted the Book from the good Siberian woman before he was imprisoned." It is the Newest Testament. Nationality is transcended here. Indeed, the critic finds that it is Dostoyevsky "whom we have to thank for the purification and preservation of German cultural values which we let fall into decay." There is nice irony in this tribute, and there is more in the fact that from the very people which was Dostoyevsky's *bête noire* should come so sympathetic an interpreter.

Meier-Graefe's enthusiasm is all too comprehensive: it embraces the man as well as the novelist, and even the journalist. He finds in Dostoyevsky "a continuation of Alyosha in the spirit of the Idiot," in others words, the Russian Christ. Dostoyevsky is the "brightest," as Tolstoy is the "most obscure of spirits." Meier-Graefe marvels at the drawing of that old satyr, Karamazov *père,* since no character is so far removed from his creator. Were he sore at heart, were he vexed in spirit, Meier-Graefe would the more urgently wish Dostoyevsky out of his grave that he might go to him for solace. "If the wise man were approached in vain, the poet (*der Dichter,* the writer) would also be worthless." It may be observed parenthetically that this pregnant statement, made on page 383, is all but invalidated on page 390 by the remark: "There was nothing except the poet in him." Now, that Dostoyevsky had nothing of old Karamazov in him is highly doubtful. A more plausible view of the man presents him as holding in unstable equilibrium the elements of the saintly Alyosha and of Alyosha's brutish father, and that in their creator the two extremes touched. Certainly, to imagine that in his personal relations this atrabilious, difficult, sick man, full of prejudices and hatreds, was a source of wisdom and light, is to ignore the facts.

The book being a literary study, one would expect it to deal with matters of structure and style. The latter Meier-Graefe does not consider, since he has no Russian. As for the question of form, his sole contribution is the recognition that Dostoyevsky invented what the critic calls the "novel-drama," to suit his peculiar genius. He suggests that this form was developed from the monologues in "Notes from the Underground," and further, that Dostoyevsky failed to write his projected novel, "The Great Sinner" because it would have demanded continuous narration, rather than the dramatic, catastrophic method. These are penetrating remarks, but as for the "novel-drama," the idea has been a commonplace in Russian criticism since 1911, when Vyacheslav Ivanov published his paper: "Dostoevsky and the Novel-Tragedy."

There is rest and refreshment for the reader in Meier-Graefe's *résumés* of the novels. They are so detailed that they make the book a kind of Baedeker to Dostoyevsky. These passages manage to convey the tension and effluvia of the Russian's pages. Dostoyevsky himself might thus have retold his tales. What agitated him genuinely moves his interpreter. Many shrewd observations, both on the novelist and his characters, are dropped by the way, although even when the arguments seem trenchant and the intuitions right, there is often an element of the unreal and the arbitrary to mar the thought. What he has to say about Dostoyevsky's debt to Schiller is new and important. He also establishes illuminating analogies between our man and the painters of whom none can speak with greater authority than himself.

The gist of the book is this. Russia holds the heart of the continent which bears the little European peninsula like a head on a giant body that "extends from Byzantium to the Arctic and connects these two poles with a curve across Asia." And Dostoyevsky is the heart of this Russia: "Love has never been portrayed so passionately as in the Karamazovs, love of God, of life, of mankind, of woman. Never has hatred been depicted in such terrible color. . . ." For all its defects, then, and although the thesis is never explicitly stated, the book does seem to reach the core of Dostoyevsky: emotion, not reason, is the principle of life.

AVRAHM YARMOLINSKY.

In Vindication of Poetry

Mr. Pope and Other Poems, by Allen Tate. New York: Minton, Balch and Company. 52 pages. $2.

OF the generation of poets now under thirty-five years of age, Hart Crane and Allen Tate are indubitably the most impressive figures and the only figures likely to prove ultimately of major importance. E. E. Cummings, a species of sentimental pícaro, has raised descriptive prose to a remarkably high level and has written certain exquisite poems; but he lacks convictions (not conviction) and direction. Archibald MacLeish possesses at least as much ability, but lacks moral toughness—he succumbs to his emotion a little too easily to reach major scope and intensity. Others have written remarkable poems, probably none so many nor so good. It becomes easier, therefore, to define Tate by comparing him to Crane, who is better known, than by describing him in isolation. Crane's quantitative achievement is much greater, and in all likelihood Tate has not as yet quite equaled the quality of Crane's best work; but on the other hand Tate's field of awareness, his general intelligence, is broader and better disciplined. Crane is aware only of those values that pertain to himself as an absolutely isolated phenomenon; Tate is aware not only of these religious views, but of human, more purely ethical, ranges of feeling, and of the degree to which the two sets of values are interlocked and intensify each other. Crane is able to countenance certain metaphysical illusions; he can demand of his medicine man to "lie to us, dance us back our tribal morn"; but Tate's thinking is too lucid for this sort of thing to sustain him. He therefore finds himself without certain sources of impetus that assist (and occasionally betray) Crane; and faced by a rather more extensive and complicated problem of synthesis. If he has not written so much good poetry, one is bound to admit the very considerable possibility that he may eventually surpass Crane; and the second possibility that this superiority can quite conceivably make itself evident by the multiplication of poems as good as the best he has already written, not necessarily better. A certain amount of bulk, the bulk that comes from writing throughout a fairly long lifetime, is usually necessary for a complete definition of this type of mind.

Mr. Tate has conducted for some years a sort of guerrilla warfare against what he chooses to term "imagism," a specter that refuses to make my table dance. Several of Mr. Tate's best poems are purely a "poetry of the image"—"Light," "Death of Little Boys," for example—and in the latter he goes out of his way a bit to make it so. That

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

these poems arise from a very complex set of values, and that the poems of H. D. and Mr. Pound do not, is due less to a difference in degree of visualization than in intellectual temper. The stylistic clumsiness that appears in Mr. Tate's less successful poems (in his best one gets the opposite side of the same very valuable coin—intense, metallic weight) is due frequently, though not always, to his straining against all reason to visualize the non-visual.

His poetry represents in a considerable degree the refutation of one of his other critical doctrines: that a personal synthesis and dignity capable of producing great art are not possible amid the ethico-religious *débris* of the present moment. But this book offers indisputable evidence that an intrinsically distinguished and balanced soul has stood amid the ruins, faced them without flinching or tears, and has remained only the more firm in his own distinction because of his awareness of the unavailability of everything exterior to that distinction. The tragic vision represents a moral victory, not a rout, and the dynamic stasis of the major poet is achieved. But it is sufficiently remarkable that this should be accomplished by one of a generation that has fled on every hand to the sweets of sin, sentimentalism, and sensationalism, or to the emotional bog of nihilism; or that, to make up for a lack of positive values within, would establish a set of principles, or the principle, of meaningless destruction; or that, in its feeblest manifestations, is seeking salvation in a sort of professional somnambulism.

YVOR WINTERS.

Fiction Notes

The Bishop's Wife, by Robert Nathan. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company. $2.

THE bishop, his wife and an angel, Michael, who appears in answer to the bishop's prayer for a competent aide, form the triangle in this novel. Michael, in spite of his occasional bewilderment at the economic and social requirements for a modern ecclesiastic, turns out to be ideal. He is especially successful in raising money for the bishop's projected skyscraper church. The trouble comes when the bishop's wife, weary of the monotonous "rightness" of her life, falls in love with Michael, who then vanishes as quietly as he had come. This indictment of a modern clergyman and of a business man's church is less spectacular than "Elmer Gantry" of last year and much nearer the truth. Nathan uses rapier thrusts in preference to broadsword attacks.

M. E. U.

Our Daily Bread, by Frederick Philip Grove. New York: The Macmillan Company. $2.

LIKE its title this is a plain and substantial—and honest—story of a large family in the Canadian Northwest. It is interesting to note the cultural distinctions here exhibited between the young frontier across the border and our own older Main Street, to the advantage, on the whole, of the former. There is not a touch of glamor—all homespun, which makes sober reading and thinking.

R. H.

A Little Clown Lost, by Barry Benefield. New York: The Century Company. $2.

THE lure of Mr. Benefield's novels lies in his choice of characters. In this book he has assembled a flighty and irresponsible group and out of their interrelations has built a tragedy. Phœbe, the Little Clown, loves Shep, but leaves him in order to give him freedom to study. She returns, but departs again when she finds that she is making a rival of the baby which he has had by another woman. The story is sentimental, and the situations, especially the *dénouement,* verge upon melodrama. The simplicity and reality of the three chief people of the story, however, give the book a quality which sets it off from the ordinary run of fiction.

M. E. U.

Fools in Mortar, by Doris Leslie. New York: The Century Company. $2.

MISS LESLIE scores a bull's-eye on the permanent target of the Double Standard with a story that is persuasive though lightly presented, told with vivacity as well as pathos, and readable from start to finish. Her characters are plausible and sympathetic—the Cad not too outrageous, the Ingenue not too innocent, and the Protective Male entirely credible. There is a mounting dramatic interest, and a real suspense in the situation which cuts off the story and constitutes a stinging commentary on our persistent social creeds. The shaft is slender, but its drive is powerful and straight—and is no less effective for the incidental pleasure the reader derives from its quality as literary entertainment.

D. B. W.

King Akhnaton, by Simeon Strunsky. New York: Longmans, Green and Company. $2.50.

FICTION, satire or political parable—Mr. Strunsky's story is as easy to read as it is hard to classify. A youthful member of the Egyptian heretic-king's Syrian Peace Commission gives a light-hearted account of the expedition to Jerusalem to establish a League of Aton founded upon ideals of international peace and good will. The chronicle parallels the course of post-world-war events more and more closely as it approaches a climax that is simply the shadow of the Versailles Conference cast backward 5,000 years. The shadow portraits of the principal participants are political cartoons in silhouette—laughable, grotesque and, in the case of the defeated king, pathetic. A wispy love-story trails across the pages and makes a delicately moving pattern about the progress of the analogy. But the substance of the book is expressed in a serio-comic sigh for unpractical idealism and a tribute to the memory of Woodrow Wilson.

D. B. W.

Contributors

EDWARD MEADE EARLE, associate professor of History at Columbia University, is the author of "Turkey, the Great Powers, and the Bagdad Railway."

FELIX FRANKFURTER, the author of several books on legal subjects, is a professor of law at the Harvard Law School.

DAVID MCCORD is the author of "Oddly Enough," a book of essays. This sketch will be included in his new book of essays entitled "Stirabout," to be published this month.

ROBERT E. CUSHMAN is Goldwin Smith Professor of Government at Cornell University.

AVRAHM YARMOLINSKY is Chief of the Slavonic Division in the New York Public Library.

YVOR WINTERS is the author of several volumes of poetry. The most recent are "The Magpie Shadow" and "The Bare Hills."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED